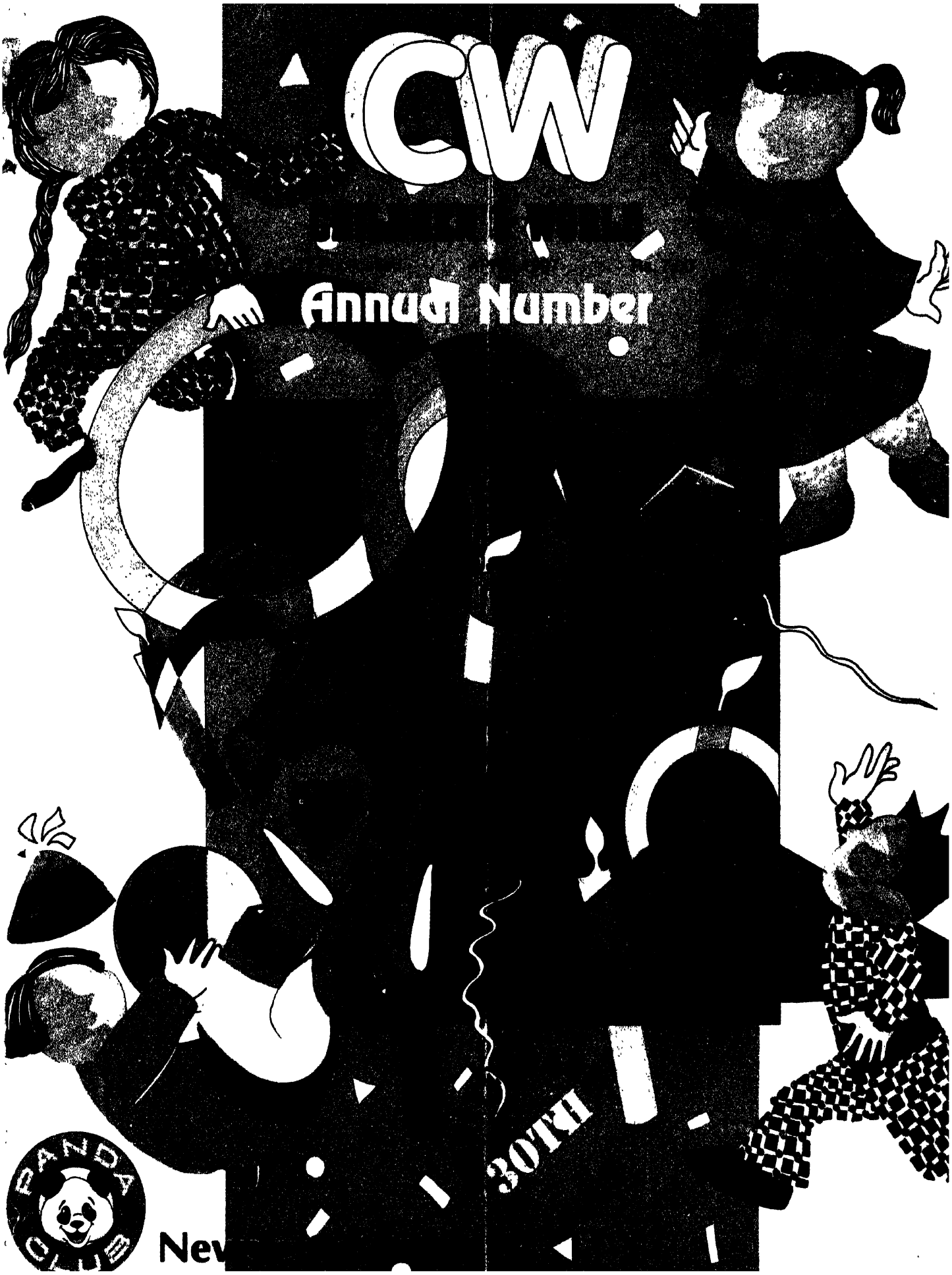
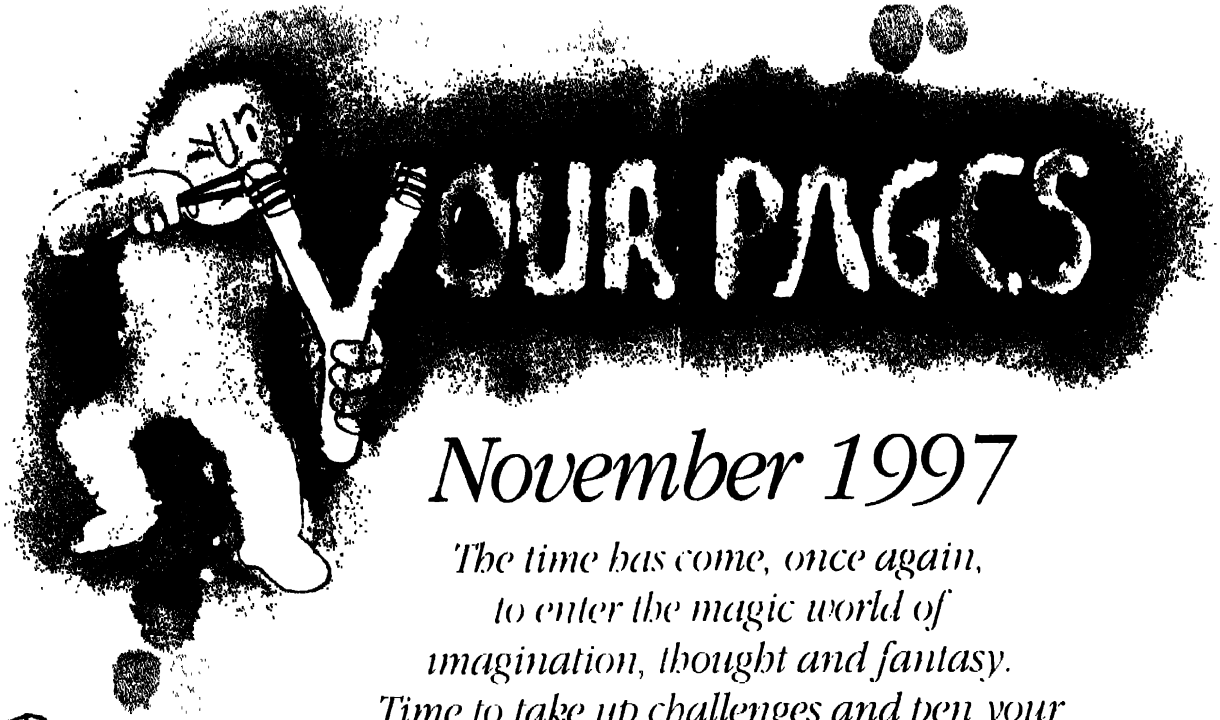

CW
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PANDA CLUB
30TH



November 1997

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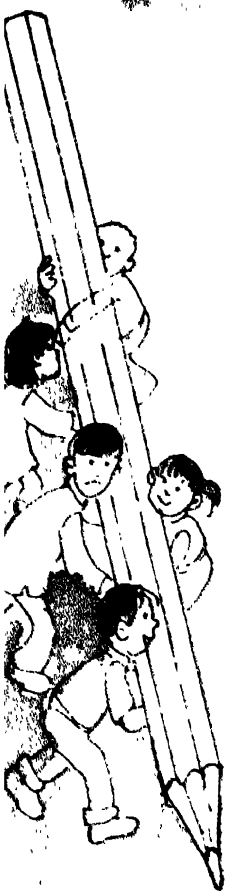
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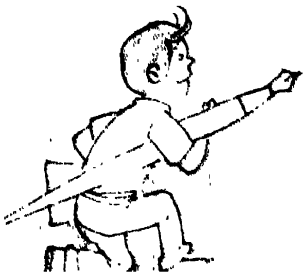
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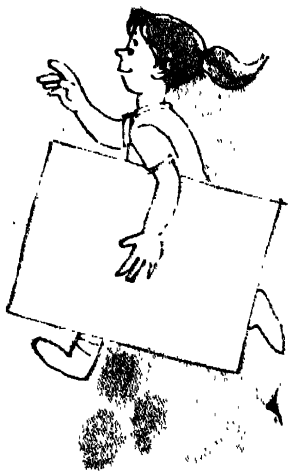
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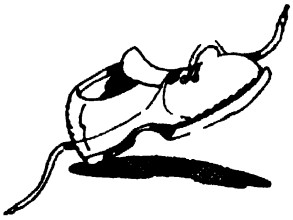
A PARADISE FOR BIRDS
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Cover design: Ajanta Guhathakurta
Computer assistance: Ashwani Singhal

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...Dear Readers

We were the smart brigade. We would, in a few years' time, bring in the age of bell-bottom pants, go-go glasses and go-go watches. We'd have long, black hair flowing down our backs. We were the 'with-it' generation, the ones who established the children's power concept, and pioneered the idea of 'kid' hosting. Disc-jockeying for *In the Groove* on AIR's Yuv Vani. Or participating in the only children's programme *Bachchon ke liye* on Doordarshan's then single channel. We overawed our parents and teachers with the number of engagements we had to keep—the ease with which we brought back trophies and prizes for the school.

It was 1968 and to prove children's power was here to stay, came the first copy of our very own magazine. Only one man could have thought of it. And the one and only *Shankar* did! He launched *Children's World* for the children of the world and opened up a whole new world for us. Our articles got published. Some like Sujata Mehta became child reporters—by interviewing the then Secretary-General of the UN, U Thant,for the magazine.

But do not make the mistake of believing even for a moment that all was hunky-dory in the world of children. We had our share of raps with the 'generation gap'. The 'Our children are so wonderful and talented' was restricted to exposing us to all opportunities and influences by our parents. Within the confines of the four walls of the house,however, we were still children with all the accompanying dilemmas, disputes, and disagreements, often with comic overtones.

"Mummy," I recall screaming one morning, "can't we ever begin the day without your 'do this', 'don't do that's?"

"How do you want me to begin the morning?" she asked, "with talks on the moon and the stars?"

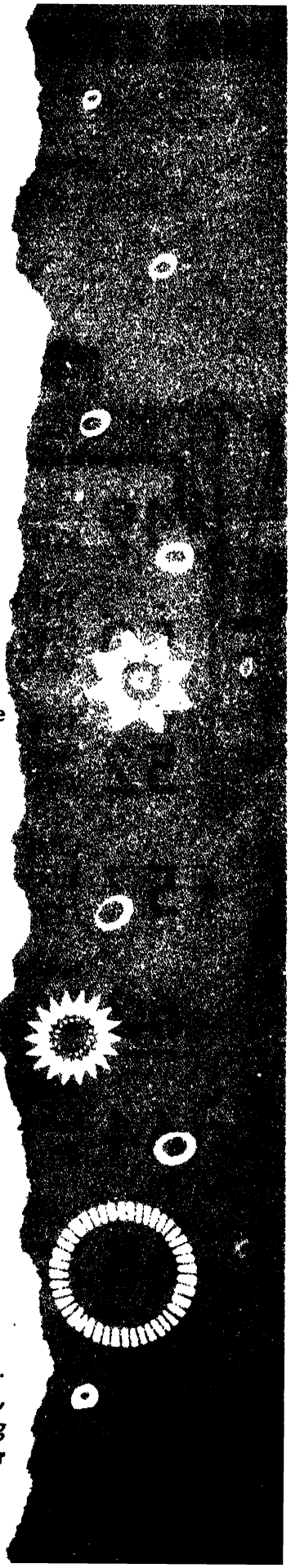
"Astrophysics?" I raised one eyebrow, "I should think not."

There was something scathing on the tip of my mother's tongue. But it never came out. All she said was, "Wait till you have kids of your own."

Today, most of us from the children's power generation have kids of our own. Children, who avoid unnecessary confrontations, leave messages for us on our answering machines. Children, who do not hesitate to tell us they are proud of us—their parents—or ashamed, as the case may be. Children, who sometimes exasperate us so much we'd like to spank them! Children who manage our homes *and* their school, efficiently, when we are ill or away on tour. Yet there are disputes! So where are all the smart repartees, the biting jibes, the quicksilver flashes of yore when it comes to dealing with *my* child? Why do I turn to putty, suffused, engulfed with this overwhelming love and tenderness—why is there a feeling of hurt and betrayal when my child and I have an argument? Why does the heart ache so much thereafter that you can think of nothing more to whisper, but, "You will understand when you have children of your own, may God show you the way then"?

God, and our parents perhaps, did help a lot to make us grow up right, then. But a major helping hand was *Children's World.* Today, thirty years later CW is still doing that for those who have abided by it; just how, special stories written by some of our best writers, will tell you. Starting with this, its 30th birthday issue, CW will be bigger. To match the space in your heart for it.

Enjoy every bit. God bless you.
Happy birthdaying,
and happier reading
Editor



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VANDANA 24/93 CKB

GROWING PAINS

Text and photographs : Vandna Khare
Illustrations : Nilabho Dhar Chowdhury

THIS ARTICLE almost never got written because most parents could not say whether the conflicts and misunderstanding that occurred helped kids grow up right—they are still in the thick of it. Perhaps I should have met their parents who would be able to judge whether the pain and anguish of opposing a child's will was worth it, and have met our generation to see if what we learnt from experience was worth it. The world has changed, the rules have changed and so have the children.

Says Manju Singh, a teacher, "Children don't accept things as they come—they want reasons for everything—even from their teacher."

Nevertheless parental approval is important to a child's enjoyment of things be it television programmes or clothes. Aditi Mukherjee, 12 says "I like watching DD Comedy, Kingdom Adventure and Phantom. I feel they are very good, but Mamma doesn't think so. If I am watching Phantom, she will comment, 'Are you watching Phantom again?' and she says she will pack away the televi-



sion." Her mother, Shobhana, says that the incident has been quoted out of context. Her objections to Aditi watching televison all the time stem from the fact that "she has to know when to stop... to choose her programmes for the day, let me know so that we can plan the day accordingly".

Aditi remembers a particular incident when she wanted to watch DD Comedy but could not do so because she had exhausted her TV time. She had to study but, she found it a waste, "because I couldn't concentrate. I kept thinking that must be coming, and couldn't see what was in front of me". Shobhana says it would be okay if faring badly at school did not matter to Aditi, but it does, and "that's when I say if you don't finish your school work—you will feel bad and shy away from yourself ".

Aditi agrees with her but says that at times she opposes Mamma because "I feel, maybe, she will say 'no' but let's give it a try, and then if she says 'no' I think—I knew it! I knew it"! Asked whether she would watch that particular programme the coming Sunday, Aditi says, with an impish glimmer in her eyes, "Yes, I'll plan and fit it into the three programmes I can watch and see it in place of something else."

Palash Jain, 11, says he comes home every day thinking he will finish his homework first, but then he is too

tired to do so by the time he gets home (at Asiad Village), from Noida. He watches TV till 5 or 6 o'clock while his mother keeps urging him to finish his homework. He realises his mistake later and says, "Ma, I should have listened to you—tell me tomorrow." But Alka says it's the same the next day. What both her kids hate is being told 'I told you so!'

Reviewing past conflict situations, 14-year-old Moulsari Jain says she often agrees in her heart with her mother, "But I don't want to give in. I think if I give in this time, it won't be the last time. I will have to give in every time. She will expect that from me."

Alka agrees, "I do get the impression that she wants to rebel—to show herself as an individual. Then, on the other hand, when she faces a problem she wants me there but won't tell me the crux of the matter. She feels I won't understand because I am not in her shoes. I would let her scream at me to a certain extent, but she has to learn it can't always be like this."

Moulsari says that when she faces the problem again "Mummy should understand and at least know what I am going through, even though I can't tell her what it is. I am angry with her because of that."

Fear of parental disapproval can make a child resort to unfair means to achieve results. Suchismita Chatterjee, a teacher, says she was caught unawares by an average to good student of her's rewriting his marks in his report card. "Normally I check the report cards of students who don't do so well, to check if the parents' signature is not forged. Here it was only when I was filling in the next term's marks that I found he had changed his marks—turning the seven of a 17 out of 20 to eight or nine. The child was so scared of future reprisals that he changed his marks altogether. I was shocked and spoke to his mother who understood saying the father expected him to do very well. But the father denied pushing his son." She finds that the boy is losing interest in his studies. His grades have not improved.

For Malavika Gaur, 11, watching TV instead of doing her homework, is like letting her mother know she is rebelling against being allowed to play or cycle downstairs. She comes home from school to watch matches on TV. "I wouldn't watch so much TV if I were allowed to cycle or play cricket downstairs." Cycling on the road is something her mother, Abha, will not allow her to do—she's afraid she will be run over by the cars that whiz past.

As a matter of fact there are hardly any children around to play with. She finds girls her age very boring and though boys play cricket occasionally on the street they don't ask her to join them. The rest of the Gaur children too find the lack of friends in their colony stifling.



Choice of clothes creates unhappiness. Arjun Chatterjee, 10, says he often wants to wear the clothes meant for outings at home, but his Mummy, Suchismita, will not let him. "I feel a bit sad and angry because we have to wear these clothes outside and not at home," he says wistfully, adding, "When my parents, say 'no' I feel a bit an-

gry, but afterwards I understand." Aditi, on the other hand, says her problem is that she doesn't know what she wants to wear when she goes out, "There are so many dresses... I can't make o which one to wear. So I as Mummy what to wear and sh pulls out a dress I don't want to wear. And I say THA DRESS!" Shobhana gets the feeling that Aditi reacts that way just because she has selected a particular dress. But why does Aditi have to ask her? Aditi retorts plaintively, "I can't choose! I don't know what to wear. Whether to wear this dress or that dress. I can't wear all of them! And as I am going out I can't change every five minutes!'



Things are different for Ira Gaur, 14. She wants to wear shorts but isn't allowed to. Abha, her mother, says while she has no objections, it is not accepted in their family. In fact both Ira and her 17-year-old sister, Pallavi, have resolved conflicts by giving in entirely to parental/familial wishes. What irritates Pallavi is Abha's criticism of her friends who Abha considers unsuitable. Pallavi questions, "She wants us to be friends with the so called 'smart' ones at school but when we can't do anything they do like going on excursions, for birthday parties or treks from school, what's the use of being friends with them?" Adding as an afterthought, "We are expected to be smart, but cannot do things smart kids do—so what's the point of being friends with them?" The price paid is quite heavy at school, "In fact we are known as the snobs at school. Whenever the teacher wants to know who will be going on an excursion, the class choruses, 'Pallavi won't be'." Abha says they usually can't join excursions because there is no one to either drop or pick them up.

Distances and the inability of most parents to either pick up or drop their children is echoed by Arunabh Chatterjee, 8. He too has to miss parties because none of his friends live close by, so if his father isn't at h he just has to st



Contradictions in parental behaviour and expectations are a sore point with Pallavi and Ira, who say that, on the one hand, they are expected to study diligently, especially join a professional course but, on the other hand, marriage comes first, and as soon as possible. Questions Ira, "Why should I study medicine if, after putting in all that effort, I will not be allowed to work?" Pallavi says, "Should I try for admission to a good college or course just so that I can get a good match? Why should I?"

Suchismita says, "Children nowadays ask you 'why' for everything. Something we never did. We continue living by the same handbook, but children who are exposed to so many different lifestyles



through television want to follow them." A thought Aditi echoes when she wishes her world were more like that in 'Boy Meets World'.

Some things parents do upset children too, leading to misunderstandings. On a trip to Bhutan last year, eight-year-old Aarushi Mukherjee was upset when her mother accepted the shopkeeper's offer of selling her the belt she herself was wearing. Shobhana says, "She was so upset that *Didi* had bought a belt and the shopkeeper did not have another one, that when the lady said, 'If you like you can have my belt' I agreed, seeing how upset Aarushi was, but then she refused to buy it." Aarushi says, "I felt it was really bad of Mamma to accept the belt... I wanted a belt, not the belt." They did not buy the belt seeing Aarushi's reaction, but she still thinks it was bad of her mother to accept the offer.

Arunabh, her contemporary in age, feels bad because his mother, Suchismita, teaches in the same school where he studies, and the teachers report directly to Mummy. "I get a little angry because Ma'am tells Mummy in front of everyone. She should not tell Mummy." To him the other children at school are luckier because they only get told about on parents-teacher day.

Do parents enforce authority rather than trust? Do children rebel just to assert their own identity? Both struggle, as hard as they can, to create a sound foundation, for a relationship that eventually leads to trust and friendship.

Story : Karan Gill (8)
Illustrations : Nilabho Dhar Chowdhury

SHYAM was to play football for his school.

He said to his father, "I don't want to. I will get hurt."

Shyam's father said, "Just do it."

The next day his mother said, "Go to the market and buy five eggs."

Shyam said, "I am afraid of Mr. Ghosh."

Shyam's mother said, "Just do it."

During the football match, Shyam didn't get hurt. Mr. Ghosh was very kind to Shyam and gave him one extra egg.

His father said, "You have to learn swimming, Shyam."

Shyam said, "I will get drowned."

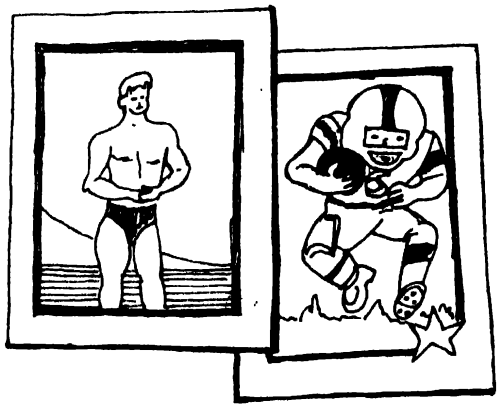
His father said, "Just do it."

When Shyam had had a few lessons of swimming, his father asked him, "Did you drown?"

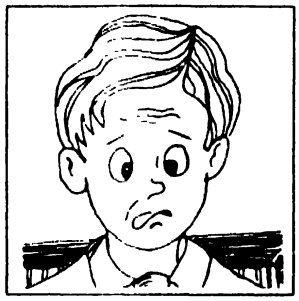
"No," said Shyam.

From that day Shyam did not make any excuses.





A SPELL UNCHARMED



Story : Amit Pandey
Illustration : Seema Pandey



"OH, NO, NOT AGAIN," cried out Rohan as he entered his room, back from school.

"What's the matter, son?" asked his mother as she rushed over.

"Someone has been messing around my room again," said Rohan irritably.

"Messing around? I thought I had cleaned it," said his mother.

"But Ma, I like my things spread around so that I can find them easily," said Rohan. "And besides, it's my room, isn't it?"

"Yes, of course," said his mother with a sigh as she went back to the kitchen.

Rohan, a tenth standard student, was a smart 15-year-old. A good student, a sports freak and an avid TV watcher. His favourite channels were all those showing visions of the West. With all that he exposed himself to, it wasn't surprising that he had grown to deeply admire the seemingly unrestrained life the western teenager appeared to enjoy. It had started to develop into an obsession with him, and he did not try too hard to keep it a secret.

"Rohan, dinner is getting cold, *beta*," cried his mother twice before Rohan switched off the TV and came to the table, dragging his feet.

"What's the matter, son?" asked his father as he started to serve himself. "Didn't you hear your mother call?"

"I did," said Rohan, "but I

fail to understand the logic of eating by the clock. Why can't you just leave something in the fridge for me to have at leisure? Or better still, leave it to me to fix something for myself."

"Well, our guy is getting older," his father chuckled.

"I am serious, Dad. Why can't we live like people in America do? It doesn't bother parents out there if their daughters stay out partying the whole night. And here I am, a boy who has to be back even from my friend's house before dinner time," said Rohan.

His father looked at his mother, who just raised her eyes helplessly and began to eat. Then he turned to Rohan and said, "Well, once in a while we don't mind, son..."

"Yes, that's what you do," interrupted Rohan. "Once in a while, as if I am a kid who would get lost somewhere. Oh, come on, Dad, I'm fifteen. Guys my age in America are practically living on their own. You know what I mean."

"I doubt if I really know, son," said his father. "Give me some time to think it over, and then maybe we can talk."

Next morning, as everyone settled down at the table for breakfast, Rohan's father kept aside the newspaper and said in a deep voice, "Rohan, I've given it a thought and I suppose you are right."



"About what, Dad?" asked Rohan trying to hide his excitement.

"Well," said his father, "your Ma and I had a long talk yesterday night. We have realised how much you cherish your freedom or whatever you call it. So today, from this very moment, we want you to feel liberated."

Rohan was more confused than ecstatic. It all seemed too sudden. "You mean I can stay out late for parties?"

"Yes," said his father.

"I can choose my own dinner time, keep my room as I feel like..."

"Yes, son," interrupted his father, "you can even fix your own breakfast."

Hearing this Rohan suddenly realised that his plate was empty. He looked at his mother who just smiled and said, "You didn't answer my call for breakfast thrice, son, so I thought maybe you had some plans for breakfast too..."

Rohan was shocked, but there was little he could do. So he just grabbed a banana as he ran for the school bus. By the time he reached school, whatever his father had said started to settle in, and for once he was happy, very happy.

After school, as the children made for their buses, Rohan thought of getting the first taste of his new-found freedom. "Hey, Parag," he asked one of his friends, "how about staying back for a while?"

"Six hours of enriching confinement is enough for me, pal," said Parag, "and if I miss that bus of mine Mom will have to warm up my lunch again and I hate it." Parag hopped inside his bus.

Rohan turned away muttering to himself. "Fool," he said. "People like him can never cultivate a personality of their own." He tried talking many of his other friends into staying back for a while, but apparently no one seemed interested. So Rohan reluctantly boarded his own bus. By now the seats were occupied, and he had to stand all the way home.

Tired and angry he reached home only to find the door locked. By now Rohan was really agitated. Just then a window opened in the adjacent house and Mrs. Kapoor, their neighbour, called out to him, "Rohan *beta*, your mother has gone out shopping; the keys to the house are with me."

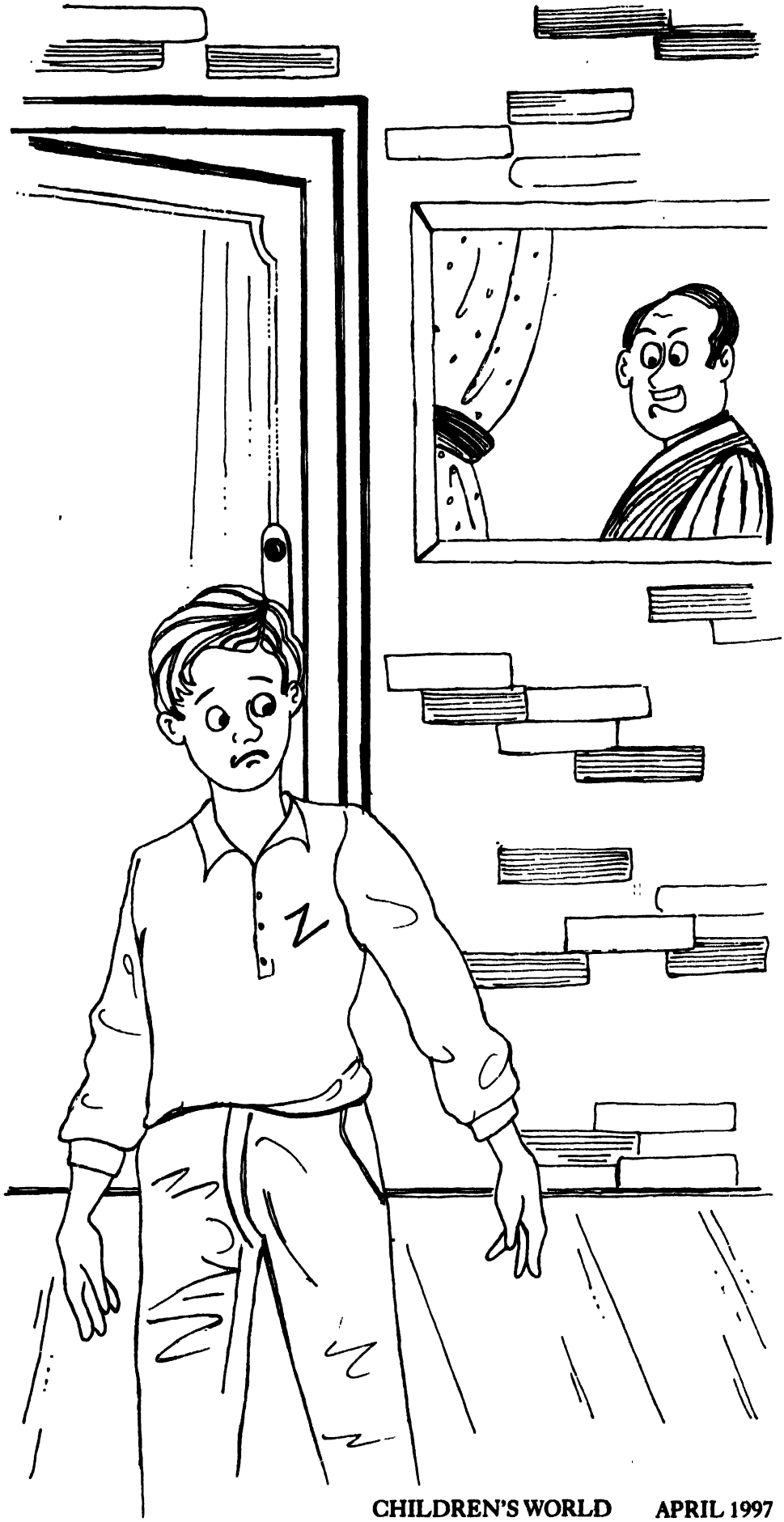
Rohan thanked her, grabbed the keys and started for home. 'This is a planned conspiracy,' he thought as he entered. 'If they think I can't live upto my own ideas, I'll prove them wrong.'

Lunch was on the table, but he was too tired to eat his fill. Besides, the added chore of serving himself and clearing the table seemed all too burdensome. As he entered his room, his irritation doubled. The normally sparkling room at this hour was exactly in the shabby state he had left it in, in the morning. "It's a dream," he muttered as he closed his eyes. But reality faced him in its disarrayed best. He strained his aching limbs just enough to clear up some space on the bed to drop down and doze off.

He woke up with a start, only to slump down with a throbbing head. The door bell rang again, shrill and loud. Rohan tumbled out of bed and opened the door.

"Hi, young man," said his





mother walking in, "you don't look too well."

"I'm fine," said Rohan in a prickly tone.

"You should be," said his mother. "It's only that I see that your liberation celebrations have left you exhausted."

Rohan was feeling too low to think of anything smart to say. So he just washed his face, changed into whatever clothes he could lay his hands on, and started for his friend, Anil's house.

Anil was only too happy to see him. The two friends played for a while, watched TV, had tea together, but even as the hours ticked away, Rohan showed no inclination to go back home. Anil's growing discomfort was all too obvious to see, but Rohan kept on finding excuses to ignore it. He wanted to stay out late that night; he just had to. Finally, as the clock struck ten, Anil's mother came into the room and said, "Rohan *beta*, don't you think your parents would be getting worried about you?" It was not a question. Her tone made it clear that it was time to leave.

Just as he was getting out he heard Anil's father say, "What's wrong with this chap? Have his parents disowned him?" The words stung Rohan. He knew he had overstayed his welcome but this was humiliating.

Rohan dragged his feet slowly round the streets, committed to his notion of going back late, if only to satisfy himself. Suddenly he heard a shout, "Thief, thief, stop."

Someone raced past Rohan butting his elbow into his side. Before Rohan could straighten up, he was blinded by a flurry of blows across his face. Rendered speechless with shock, he just stood there as a man shook him by the collar and slapped him repeatedly across his face. He seemed to be asking about a purse, but Rohan could not understand. He was stupefied with pain and shame. Then suddenly an arm went round his shoulder and the hitting stopped. "Stop it," someone shouted. "I know him. Just leave him alone."

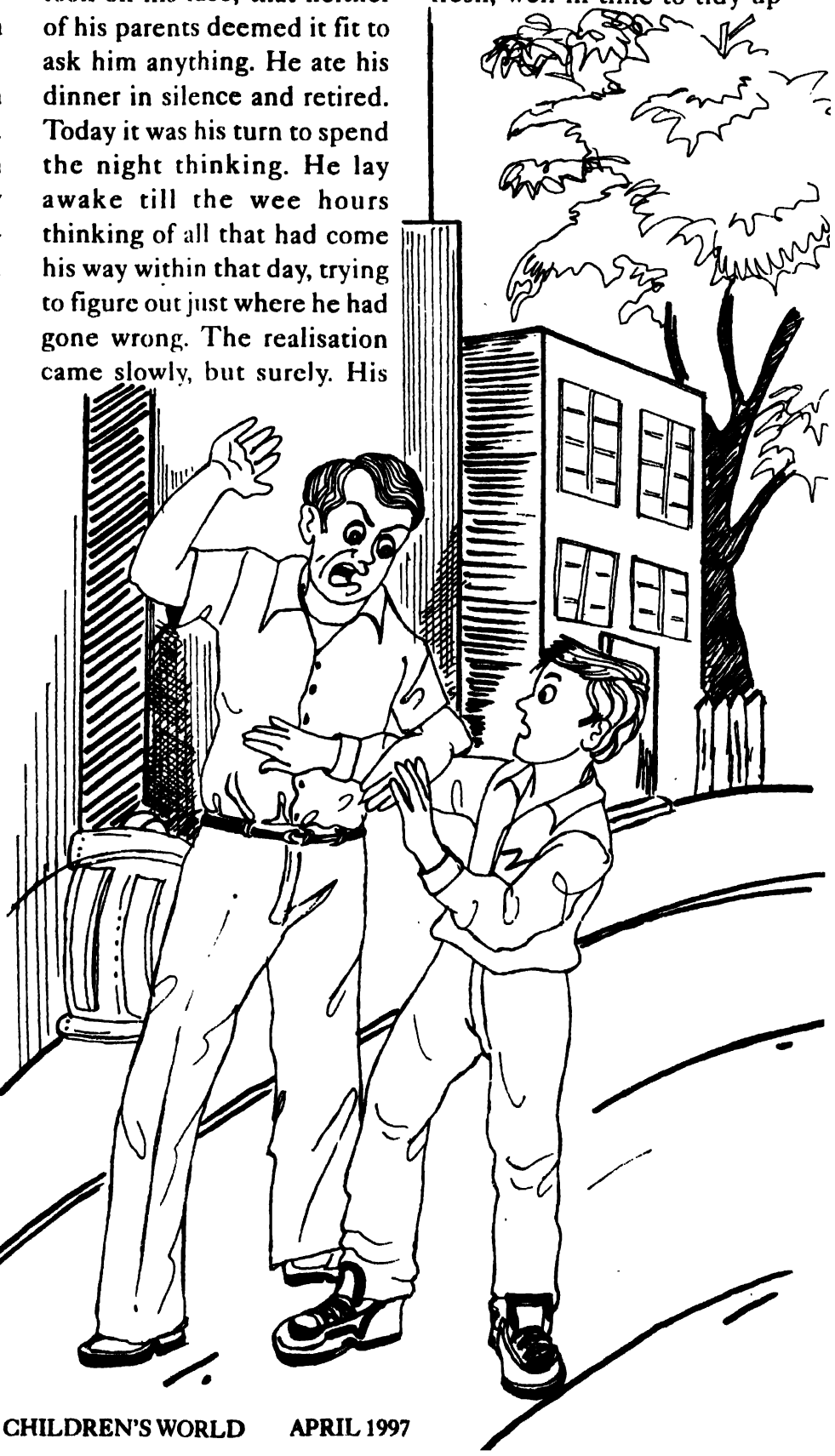
As the onlookers started to disperse, Rohan looked up to find Mr. Kapoor, their neighbour, standing beside him. "What are you doing here at this hour, Rohan?" he asked.

"I was just coming back from a friend's house," was all Rohan could stammer.

"All right, all right," said Mr. Kapoor, "we can talk about it later. Now get into the car, we will go back home together."

Sitting in the car, Rohan regained his composure in time to request Mr. Kapoor to keep the incident to himself. A good-natured man, Mr. Kapoor, thought it was a case of a child's delicate self-esteem, and readily agreed. Rohan entered his home with such a look on his face, that neither of his parents deemed it fit to ask him anything. He ate his dinner in silence and retired. Today it was his turn to spend the night thinking. He lay awake till the wee hours thinking of all that had come his way within that day, trying to figure out just where he had gone wrong. The realisation came slowly, but surely. His mind cleared and went to sleep.

Next morning he got up fresh, well in time to tidy up



his room a bit before getting ready for school. He went to the breakfast table at the first call. Rohan smiled at his parents and saw the relief reflected on their faces. Thankfully, none of them questioned him about anything.

As he started for school, he turned round and said to his mother, "Mom, I'll be back on time, so be there. Having lunch without you isn't one bit fun." He looked up with flushed cheeks only to find his mother's face glowing with all the love in the world.

"I'll be there, son," she said in a muffled voice.

Later that day, after coming back from school and having his lunch, Rohan called out to his mother again, "Mama, tell me how you do it."

"Do what, Rohan?" she asked as she came up.

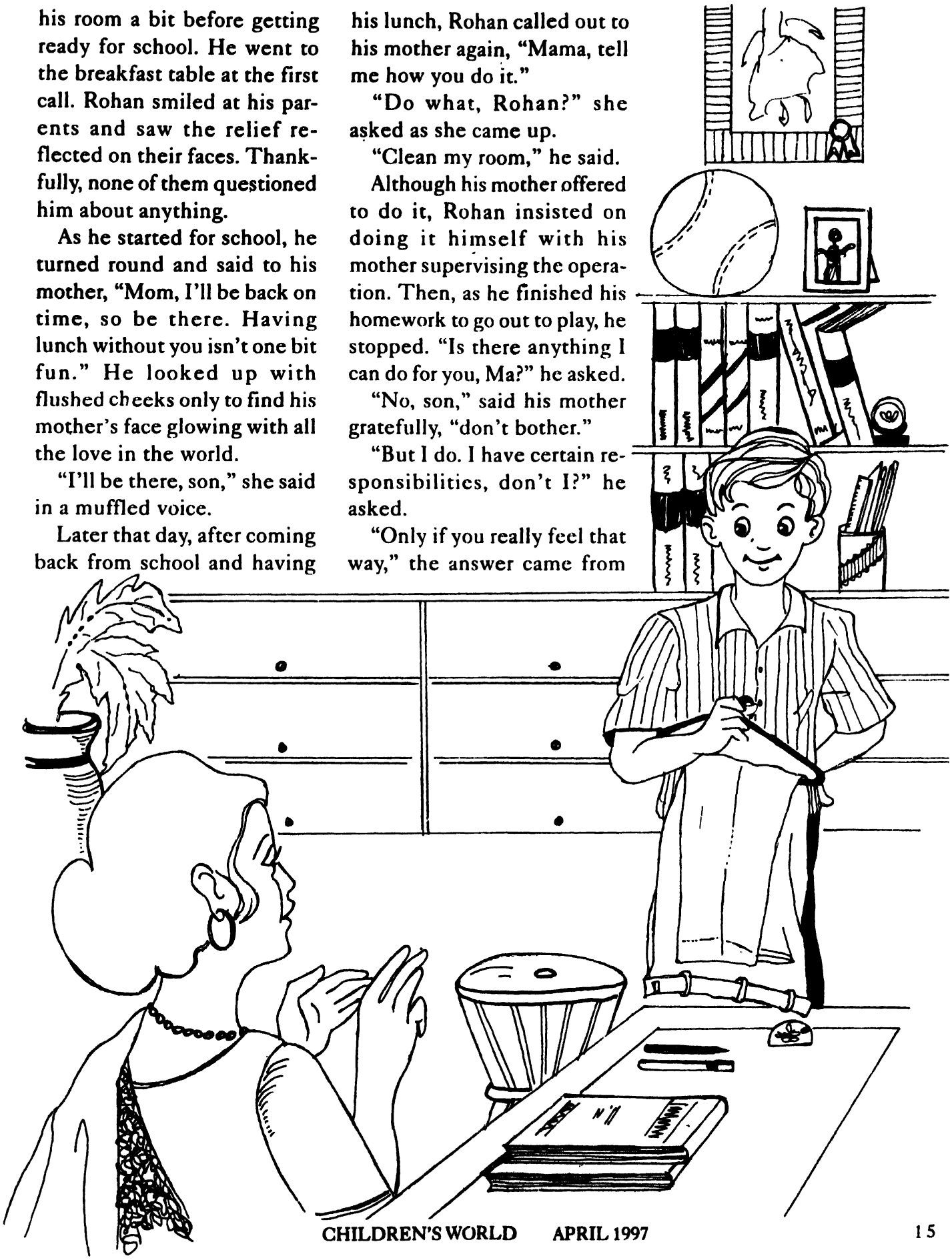
"Clean my room," he said.

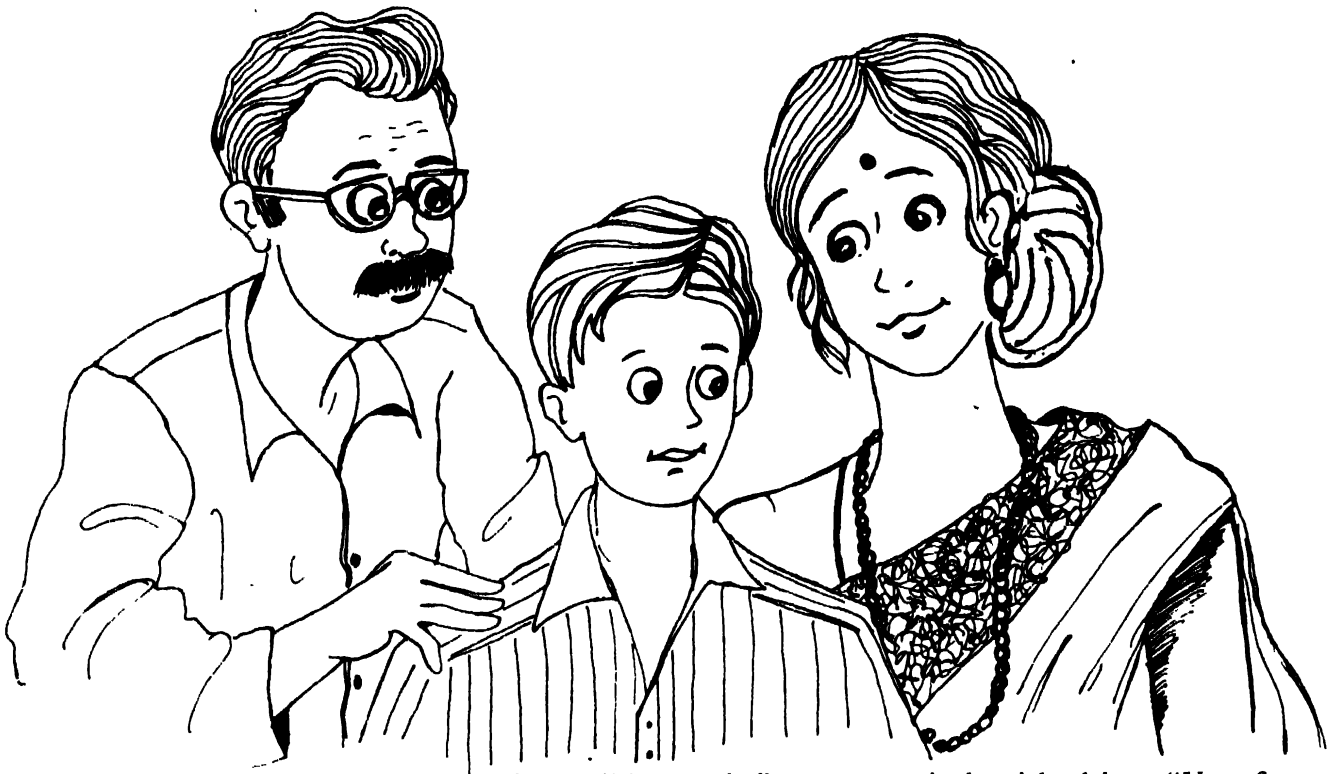
Although his mother offered to do it, Rohan insisted on doing it himself with his mother supervising the operation. Then, as he finished his homework to go out to play, he stopped. "Is there anything I can do for you, Ma?" he asked.

"No, son," said his mother gratefully, "don't bother."

"But I do. I have certain responsibilities, don't I?" he asked.

"Only if you really feel that way," the answer came from





his father, as he walked in. "But really, son," his father continued, "don't bother. You got your freedom, now go ahead and make the most of it."

It was now that Rohan said, "Dad, I want to talk to you about something."

"Go on, son," said his father as he settled on the couch.

Rohan's mother stood behind him as Rohan faced them both and began hesitantly, "You see, Dad," he said, "while sporting notions of freedom, I failed to see the responsibilities that come attached to them. I tried spending just one day the way I wanted, and ended up a wreck. I realised a lot of things last night, but I can't actually put them all in words."

"Then let me do it for you, son," said his father. "You realised that suddenly you had your freedom, but not the ability to enjoy it. You did not have any independence, that is the ability to actually take care of yourself and your personal requirements."

"I guess you're right," sighed Rohan.

"As far as partying late is concerned," chipped in his mother, "to enjoy it you have to have a social circle tuned to such enjoyment. Son, you're a bit young for that."

"That's what I'm saying," said Rohan. "I failed."

"No, you did not," said his father as he, alongwith Rohan's mother came over to sit beside him. "You found your way before stumbling too deep into trouble. Only you could make yourself realise these facts, son, and we are proud that you did."

"We would definitely like you to give it another try, a successful one," said his mother. "Just wait for a few more years."

"Say, Ma, when I'm at college?" asked Rohan excitedly.

"Bingo!" said his father, "you got it right, son, and count on us to make it the happiest, most carefree time of your life."

"I trust you Dad, Ma," said Rohan putting an arm round each of them. "After all, that's what being a family is all about."

BHASMASURA

RETOLD BY SAVITRI
ILLUSTRATIONS : Beejee

BHASMASURA WAS WICKED AND GREEDY.

I WANT TO BE A KING BUT I'M NEITHER STRONG NOR BRAVE. I CAN'T WAGE WARS OR DEFEAT OTHER KINGS...

...I SHALL PRAY TO LORD SHIVA AND ASK FOR SOME MAGIC POWERS.

BHASMASURA PRAYED HARD AND LONG IN A FOREST.

OM NAMHA SHIVAI...
OM NAMHA SHIVAI...
OM NAMHA SHIVAI...
OM NAMHA SHIVAI...

ONE DAY

I'M PLEASED WITH YOUR PRAYERS. WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU ?

O LORD, I ONLY WANT YOUR BLESSINGS.


YOU HAVE MY BLESSINGS. SURELY YOU WOULD LIKE A GIFT FROM ME...
...IT'S YOURS FOR ASKING.
THEN LET ME HAVE THE POWER BY WHICH ANYBODY WHOSE HEAD I TOUCH WITH MY RIGHT HAND IS REDUCED TO ASHES.
SO BE IT.
NOW, MY LORD, YOU MUST ALLOW ME TO TEST THE POWER YOU HAVE GIVEN ME.
HELP! THIS MAN WILL KILL ME. SAVE ME, LORD VISHNU.
HIDE HERE FOR A WHILE. I SHALL DEAL WITH BHASMASURA.
VISHNU TRANSFORMS HIMSELF INTO MOHINI.
DID YOU SEE SHIVA RUNNING THIS WAY? HE WAS IN FRONT OF ME...
...HE SUDDENLY DISAPPEARED. WHERE DID HE GO?


YOU LOOK VERY TIRED, MY LORD...
...TAKE A LITTLE REST BEFORE YOU START CHASING SHIVA AGAIN...
...HERE, SIT IN THIS COOL SHADE. I SHALL FAN YOU. THEN YOU WILL FEEL BETTER.
BEAUTIFUL LADY, WHO'RE YOU? HOW DID YOU COME HERE?
I'M MOHINI. I LIVE IN THIS JUNGLE WITH MY PARENTS. WE HELP TRAVELLERS WHO PASS THIS WAY...
...YOU LOOK HUNGRY. SHALL I GO AND GET YOU SOME FRUITS?
NO, DON'T LEAVE ME. YOUR PRESENCE HAS DRIVEN AWAY MY TIREDNESS.
I LOVE YOU, MOHINI. WILL YOU MARRY ME?
HOW CAN I? YOU MAY ALREADY HAVE SEVERAL WIVES.
I'M NOT MARRIED. AND YOU SHALL BE MY ONLY WIFE.
THAT IS WHAT YOU'RE SAYING NOW.


I GIVE YOU MY WORD. I WON'T LOOK AT ANOTHER WOMAN IF YOU MARRY ME.
ALL RIGHT, THEN PLEASE SWEAR THAT YOU WON'T TAKE ANOTHER WIFE.
I SWEAR THAT I SHALL NOT TAKE ANOTHER WIFE IF YOU MARRY ME.
THAT ISN'T SWEARING. TAKE A SOLEMN OATH TOUCHING YOUR HEAD WITH YOUR RIGHT HAND. THEN I SHALL TRUST YOU.
I SWEA...
THANK YOU, MOHINI.
END



A Family of Three

Story : Devika Rangachari
Illustrations : Nilabho Dhar Chowdhury

DEEPA WAS nin years old when he mother started working. Of course, Deepa could not remember a time when her mother wasn't busy with some project or the other. Even as an infant, she would crawl round the room busying herself with toys, while her mother would pause between her writing sessions to smile at and, perhaps, joke with her. But now her mother would be away all day, working at some office. That meant arrangements would have to be made for Deepa to be looked after till her mother returned in the evening.

"Can't I come to the office after school?" begged Deepa, almost willing her mother to agree.

"No, Deepa. That is not allowed. Where is the place for you to sit? And who will bring you there from school?" She hugged the little girl to her. "But you haven't heard the best part. I fixed things up today. You are to go home with Anjana every day after school and stay there till I pick you up in the evening. What do you say to that?"

The ecstatic look on Deepa's face was answer enough. The Reddys had been their neighbours foi ages and Anjana, Deepa's senior by four years in school, was someone Deepa looked up to and admired enormously. And Anjana reciprocated the little girl's affection in full. There was another important bond linking the two families in their common language, Telugu. Deepa often forgot that she was half-Gujarati, since she had had little to do with her father's family and hardly remembered her father at all. She knew she must have known him as a baby since the photograph on her bedroom wall of a chubby infant and a grave, tall man told her so. Her mother was all the family she had now and the Reddys too, in a way. She could chatter away with Uncle and Aunty for hours, and if Anjana was there, that was an added bonus. This was an ideal arrangement!

Deepa did not feel a moment's shyness or awkwardness on her first long day at the Reddys' house. Anjana was there for company, for help with her homework and for general advice. And Aunty more than made up for her mother's absence by her warm, welcoming smile, her hot meals and her general presence. Deepa's mother would arrive promptly at six o'clock and the two would walk home discussing the day's events and exchanging

news. She was never too tired to spend time with Deepa, however exhausting her day had been. For Deepa, it was just a question of moving between two comfortable houses every day. Weekends, of course, were special. Mother and daughter would go visiting, or shopping, or to the Library and delicious meals would be cooked at home, perhaps to compensate for the other days.

"Anjana says if I do well in class and behave properly, I can be a Prefect like her when I'm older," announced Deepa importantly one day. "Do you think she's right?"

"Of course," Deepa's mother smiled at the excited girl. "The important thing is to work hard. Your father was a Captain in school, remember? But I'd be proud of you even otherwise."

Deepa's grandmother's letter came like a bolt from the blue, a year down the line. It was waiting in the mail-box when Deepa and her mother returned home and Deepa knew it was important by the sudden raptness in her mother's expression as she read it.

"Your grandmother's coming to Delhi," she answered abruptly, as if in answer to Deepa's unspoken question.

"Why? For a visit?" Deepa asked doubtfully.

"She hasn't decided. Perhaps she will live with us now." Deepa, whose recollection of her grandmother was confined to a photograph was partly excited and partly apprehensive as to the outcome of her visit. But now at last, she had a grandparent of her own to discuss with her friends at school, as they did theirs. That was certainly something to look forward to!



Deepa's grandmother arrived on a Friday morning when Deepa was away at school. Her mother had taken leave for this special occasion so Deepa rushed home from the bus-stop that afternoon, eager to see the new addition to her small world. There she was, a tall, thin lady, sitting upright on the sofa and holding out her hand to Deepa. Deepa stepped forward shyly to be introduced and hugged and thereafter, sat by her mother's side, regarding the old lady curiously. All through lunch, they discussed people of whom Deepa had never heard. She made the discovery that her grandmother spoke little and ate even less. It occurred to her that if her father had had long hair, he would have looked exactly like her. The thought made her giggle impulsively but she was instantly quelled by her mother's look of silent disapproval, and by the fact that her grandmother did not even look in her direction.

"Go and do your homework

now," ordered her mother, giving Deepa a little push.

"Oh no," she protested. "Can't I do it later? There's not much to do. Just Geography and..."

"When I was a child your age, I listened to my elders all the time," the old lady burst out. "Don't you?"

Unprepared for this interruption, Deepa looked hesitantly at her mother, who responded with an angry frown. "Go on," she said abruptly. "Do as you're told."

A little hurt and somewhat breathless at her mother's commanding tone, Deepa went to her room and sat down at the table, angrily pulling out her maps and colour-pencils.

That weekend taught her a great deal about her grandmother. She liked everything to be done as per a time schedule, she prayed a lot and she made her mother somewhat nervous. So much so that she kept hovering around her and seemed to have little time for Deepa. She also gathered from their talk that the old lady had come to help them out.

"But with what?" demanded Deepa of her mother, finding her alone in the kitchen.

"With you, for instance," began her mother. "You should be looked after at home and not at somebody else's house. When she heard about the arrangement she..."

"But what's wrong with my going to Anjana's house? I like it there, Ma. You know that."

"I know. But now that your grandmother is here, you can come right home from school instead of troubling Reddy Aunty. It's been over a year now!"

Deepa was too upset to respond. She rushed tearfully to her room and stayed there all day. The Reddys were so much a part of her life that she would feel incomplete not going home with Anjana. Did her mother understand that?

Deepa's first day spent alone with her grandmother was nothing short of an ordeal. A hot meal was ready on the table but there was no cheerful conversation to go with it. Instead, there was a kind of stiffness in the atmosphere. The old lady sat opposite Deepa, knitting away steadily in silence. Deepa saw her glance at her once or twice as if she remembered something.

"May I go to Anjana's house?" asked Deepa tentatively after lunch, half-afraid of the reply.

"No," said her grandmother. "This is no time to go disturbing others. You should do your homework and busy yourself at home."

Confined to the house for the entire time, Deepa was aware of a growing feeling of resentment against her situation. She decided to appeal to her mother once more and perhaps convince her to resume the old arrangement. But her appeal was ill-timed, her mother being confronted almost as soon as she returned home, tired. She listened to Deepa's complaint in silence and shook her head decisively.

"I'm sorry, Deepa, but I'm not going to change a thing. Anyone would think you hated your own house from the way you talk!"

"But..."

"No buts. This is something I don't want to argue about."

Seeing her grandmother in the doorway, Deepa abruptly lapsed into Telugu to finish the argument. To her surprise, her mother replied in English and Deepa felt slighted. Afterwards her mother said, "It's not fair to your grandmother if we speak in Telugu. When she is around, we must make an effort to speak in English or Hindi. She understands both."

It was, perhaps, the memory of the evening's rebuke that prompted Deepa to disobey her grandmother's orders the following evening and rush off to Anjana's house.

"Does your grandmother know you're here?" asked Anjana.

"Yes, she doesn't mind though," Deepa lied glibly and after that first uneasy moment, she spent a very pleasant half-hour at their place. On returning home and seeing her

mother's forbidding expression, she knew that her grandmother had complained about her behaviour and wondered what her mother would say. She did not have to wait long for she was hustled to her room by her angry parent and pressed for an explanation.

"I wanted to go, so I did," said Deepa lightly, trying to ignore the sinking feeling in her heart.

"Is that all you have to say?" stormed her mother. "How can you behave so badly? I'm ashamed of you! Is this what I've taught you all these years—to defy your elders?"

"But...I just went to Anjana's house, Ma," pleaded Deepa. "What's wrong with that?"

"Because your grandmother told you not to!"

"I wish she'd never come!" exclaimed Deepa furiously. "Ma, do you have to work? Can't you stay at home so that you're always there to look after me?"

"Don't be silly, Deepa!" Her mother sounded completely exasperated. "I have to work because we need the money. Do you know how expensive your school fees are? I slave everyday for both of us and then I have to deal with this sort of behaviour at home. It's quite bad of you!"

Deepa hardly slept that night—she was so angry and miserable. She held her mother wholly responsible for her problems. If she stayed at home like Reddy Aunty, everything would be fine. Besides, she hadn't even tried to understand Deepa's point of view. Her mother had changed from the friendliest person on earth to a strict, unreasonable adult. And her grandmother was so unlike her expectations—so withdrawn and aloof and remote, as if she cared nothing for Deepa at all. Deepa sobbed her heart out at the way her life had been turned upside-down.

It was when she heard of the proposed school picnic to be held on the following Monday that Deepa, still feeling much neglected and highly misunderstood, hit upon a way to exact a satisfying revenge on her family, especially her mother. She would go to Rose Gardens with the rest of the middle school without informing anyone at home. Accordingly, she paid the required amount from her leftover birthday money and greeted the picnic morning with a slightly tremulous but strangely triumphant air. Her mother, feeling regretful of her harsh words, bade her daughter a fond goodbye from the gate. It almost made Deepa relent, but she steeled herself to her task.

Anjana sat beside Deepa on the bus after she had counted the girls and reported to the teacher-in-charge.

"Do you know what time we get home?" asked Deepa suddenly.

"Five p.m. It was on the noticeboard. Didn't you tell Aunty?"

"Of course, I did," said Deepa hurriedly. "I was just checking." She was normally home by two p.m. and would be missing then for three hours! The first twinge of misgiving assailed her. What if her mother complained to the police? What would her grandmother say? What would... Somehow the prospect of a picnic did not appeal to Deepa any longer. She did not join in the riotous games, picked at the special lunch and spent her time counting the minutes till it was time to return.

She got back onto the bus, at the end of the day, with a listless air. "Is there anything wrong, Deepa?" Anjana had been watching her all day and now her clear voice intruded on Deepa's anxious thoughts. All of a sudden, Deepa found herself blurting out the story—her unhappiness at home, her annoyance with her mother, her grandmother's restrictions and so on.

"Do you know how worried they must be by now?" asked Anjana gravely, after Deepa's long tirade. Deepa nodded shamefacedly and Anjana went on, "Mummy has told me a lot about Aunty. Your fa-



ther did not leave her much money, you know, so ever since he died, she has been working hard to support you both. You should be so proud of her, instead of which you are causing her so much worry. Did you stop to think of that?"

Deepa, feeling choked, shook her head and said nothing. It really was for her sake that her mother worked. And Deepa had asked her to leave her job and blamed her for her problems! She thought guiltily of how tired her mother was everyday after work, and how, despite this, she would be ready with Deepa's tiffin and things, before Deepa opened her eyes in the morning.

"Obviously she wants you to get to like your grandmother. After all, she is your father's mother. It seems you really haven't given her much of a chance. Remember, it will take time for all of you to adjust to each other. But you are a family, right?"

Tears were running down Deepa's face now. If only she could get home and explain things to her mother. How badly she had behaved—just like a spoilt, foolish child who didn't know better, and not like someone who might perhaps be a Prefect some day.

Meanwhile, Deepa's mother, who had rushed home from office in response to her mother-in-law's frantic call, was intensely worried and distracted, imagining the worst that could have happened to her daughter.

"Where has she gone?" she wondered aloud for the hundredth time. "She's all I have. Something awful must have happened to her!" The school phone remained unresponsive, and the Reddys had gone out. 'It's all my fault,' she thought, standing at the gate. 'I was too harsh on her that day. After all she is only a child and it is unfair to expect her to adjust easily to a new situation just because we demand it of her. Her grandmother is a stranger to her still and, till recently, the Reddys were all the family she had.'

How could a mere child understand the problems of striking a relationship with her grandmother who had avoided Deepa's father all these years because of an old quarrel? When she had wanted to resume relations with her son's family, Deepa's mother had been only too willing to welcome her and please her in every way, eager for her daughter to make a good impression on her. She had forcibly imposed her wishes on Deepa, instead of patiently explaining to her how badly she wanted this new relationship to work and how her grandmother's brusque behaviour actually hid a lonely and shy person.

It was ten minutes past five

and the winter sky was turning dark. As Deepa's mother stood by the gate, her heart pounding, she saw a bus turn down the lane and stop. Two girls alighted, one of whom tore away instantly and sprinted towards their gate. Within seconds, mother and daughter were hugging each other fiercely, relief and love writ all over their faces. Not a word was said. It was as if everything had been resolved.

Much later, Deepa's grandmother came to her room and stood there awkwardly. "Tomorrow, after school, I have a plan for you. Would you like to hear it?" In response to Deepa's shy nod, she continued, "I'll teach you Gujarati if you teach me Telugu. We'll do this every afternoon, if you like." Deepa stared wide-eyed at the old lady. This sounded like a lot of fun. "You can bring your friend, Anjana, too," continued her grandmother. "That's if she wants to learn a new language."

Deepa's mother was pleasantly surprised to see the two hugging each other, as she passed the room.

"I can't wait to start," she heard Deepa say.

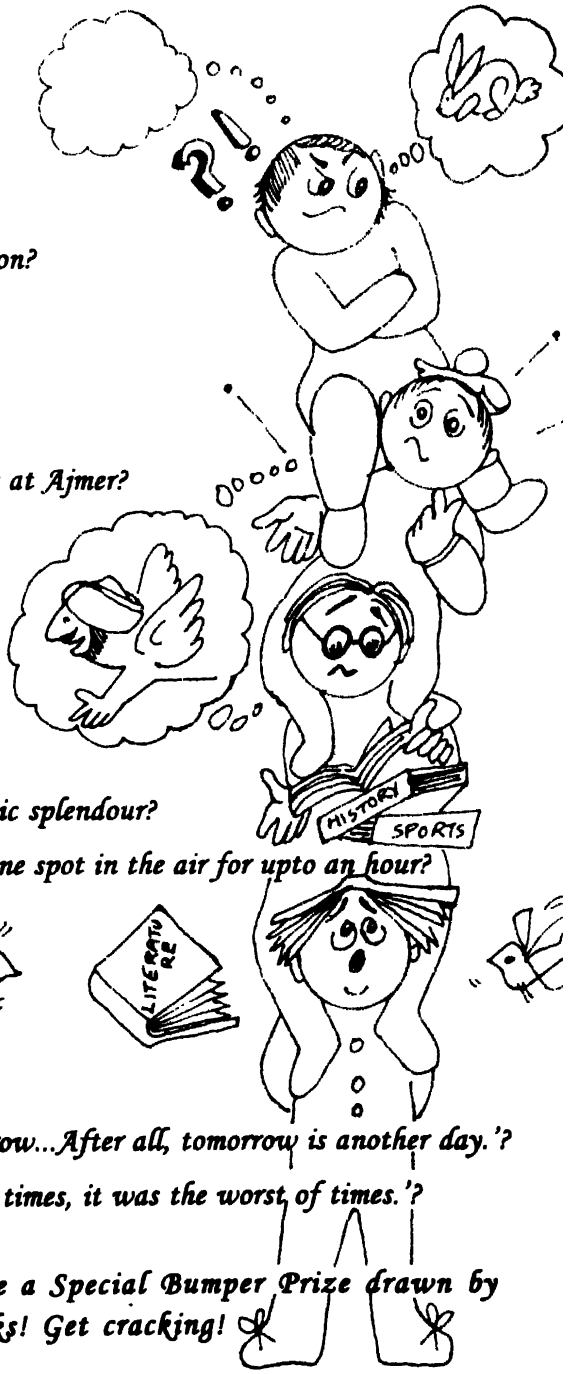




Here's a quiz to perk you up. Send in your entries and if your answers are correct you may win one of our two prizes— of Rs. 100/- each. Each entry must be accompanied by your subscription number or with a cheque for a year's subscription. Participants must be 16 years old or younger. Include your name, age, address and the name of your school. Last date for receiving entries: May 1, 1997. You could also fax your entries to us at 11-3721090.

By Sudha Sanjeev

1. *What is the name given to (a) Rabbit's tail, (b) Fox's tail?*
2. *Where does the word 'polo' come from?*
3. *Who is the Secretary General of the United Nations Organisation?*
4. *Who wrote the poem beginning 'Tiger Tiger Burning Bright'?*
5. *Who is regarded as 'the architect of the Indian Constitution'?*
6. *When was the last of the ancient Olympic games held?*
7. *What is the full name of the Muslim Sufi saint whose shrine is at Ajmer?*
8. *Who was the founder of the Bharatiya Jnanpith?*
9. *Which famous athlete was nicknamed 'The Ebony Antelope'?*
10. *Who gave India the slogan 'Inquilab Zindabad'?*
11. *Who has been described as 'The Flying Sikh'?*
12. *Which former Indian cricket captain died while playing polo?*
13. *Where do the Blue Nile and the White Nile meet in great scenic splendour?*
14. *Which bird can fly backwards, sideways and remain flying at one spot in the air for upto an hour?*
15. *Who wrote under the pen name of Elia?*
16. *Who was the last Mughal emperor of India?*
17. *Fight : Battle :: Carnage : ..... ?*
18. *Deprecate : Praise :: Illicit : ..... ?*
19. *Which famous book ends with the lines: 'I'll think of it tomorrow...After all, tomorrow is another day.'?*
20. *Which famous book begins with the words: 'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.'?*



***CW Bonanza!** At the end of twelve issues, there will be a Special Bumper Prize drawn by lot from among the 24 winners of the year. So come on, folks! Get cracking!*

***Congratulations!** John Parakatt Oomen, Quilon, Kerala, winner of Crossroads 14!*

The Secret

Story: Thangamani Illustrations : Beejee



ARJUN STARED at the book lying open in front of him. He had been at it for the past half an hour and not taken in a single word. All he saw was Kajal's face. The thick hair cascading down her back, her slender neck and her pearly smile. He liked her immensely, not only for her looks, which were smashing, but also because she was so unlike the girls in his class and neighbourhood. Though the girls vied with each other to get his attention, he was bored by them. "Stupid, giggly creatures!" he said contemptuously.

But Kajal! She was different. She had a mind of her own and she shared good vibes with him. He could talk to her as with a friend. She understood his mind; they thought along similar lines and had the same interest. She was an ideal friend, an ideal woman.

"Are you in love with her?" asked his friend, Bharat.

"Yuck! Don't give such a soppy name to a great friendship," Arjun had protested. "Just because I think a lot about her, doesn't mean I'm in love. So, I think a lot about a physics problem. That doesn't mean I'm in love with it, now, does it?" He had laughed at his own simile.

'No, I'm not in love,' he told himself aloud, now. He tried to laugh but could only smile happily. Suddenly he frowned. She was coming over less and less frequently and called up even less frequently. When he went over, she was either on the phone or had gone out. Was she avoiding him? It gave him an uneasy feeling. And especially since he had become conscious of her as a girl and not merely a friend! Maybe she was angry with him for something he had said or done.

"Arjun! Are you sleeping again? Don't you realise that I have to stay up to keep prodding you awake?" his mother called out from the other room.

'God knows how she senses it when I close my eyes,' thought Arjun in exasperation. Now he would have to answer her or she would call out again. He gritted his teeth.

"I'm not sleeping and, for the hundredth time, you don't have to stay up for my sake," he said. He rued the day he had mentioned that he felt sleepy and couldn't study late into the night when everyone else had gone to sleep. Since then, either his father or mother took turns staying up with him at least till midnight. He had got over the sleepy phase, but the practice continued, much to his annoyance.

"It is all very well for you to say that. But with your Board exams looming large, it is I who is tense, not you. I wonder who is going to appear for it!" Arjun heard her grumble to herself.

Arjun was very cross. She had gone and disturbed his dream and now he would have to get back into the mood again—to dream, that is. 'Oh, Kajal! Why don't you at least call?' he sighed. As if in answer to his plea, the phone rang. He leapt out of his chair,



but his mother beat him to the phone. 'God, did she sprint or something?' thought Arjun spitefully, subsiding into his chair.

He heard his mother speaking, "No, *beta*. He is studying and has told me not to disturb him. I'll ask him to call you tomorrow." The phone clicked.

"Who was it, Ma?" said Arjun, coming into the room. "Why do you have to tell them stupid things like that? It might be one of my friends with some doubt about the lessons." He knew he sounded shrill. It made him mad to see his mother calmly continue with the letter she had been writing.

"It wasn't any of your friends with doubts. Just Kajal. You can talk to her tomorrow as well. There is no tearing hurry!" Her voice was sharp.

"Oh, I wish you'd leave my calls alone. And to tell Kajal that I don't want to speak to her! I had said that only for the stupid girls, not Kajal!"

"And Kajal is not a 'stupid girl', is she?"

"No, I mean, no, she is not stupid and yes, she is a girl. I don't know what you have against Kajal. She is such a nice person. How do you know it wasn't something important? We haven't talked in ages! She has been having problems..." He began dialling her number still ranting, when his mother disconnected the phone.

"And you, of course, have to solve them for her, haven't you? She will talk to you when she is nice and ready and you will dump everything and run the moment she crooks her little finger, isn't it? Look, Arjun. This has gone too far. You have your exams in another couple of weeks and here you are receiving and making calls to your girl friends at unearthly hours. I wish your father didn't have to go on that long tour. He'd have known how to handle you! At your age we could never think of

even talking to boys..."

She knew she had spoilt the chance of getting through to him. She certainly had not meant to say what she had. She could have bitten her tongue the moment the words were out. 'It is bad enough he thinks of me as an old fuddy-duddy,' she thought ruefully.

"Oh, Ma, don't start that again. Kajal is not my 'girl friend', in that sense, okay? I thought you were broad-minded enough not to put labels on relationships." Arjun knew that a bit of flattery went a long way. His mother herself had taught him that. Hadn't she made him do chores he didn't want to, all his life, just by praising him?

"I know I should get good marks. I am not in the kindergarten, for heaven's sake! Anyway, it is my lookout, why are you worried? I bet that had you had even half a chance, you'd have talked with boys, too..." he added under his breath.

With that, he picked up the cordless phone and went into his room. His mother stared after him helplessly. She had heard his muttered outburst. Her heart ached for him. She knew he had to learn things the hard way—one always did in life. But she wished to make the blow softer for him, her baby. If only he knew!

That night she wrote a letter. This one was addressed to her son. She had important things to do after that. "...Kajal is just using you as a shoulder to weep on. I can see from your reactions that she is more than just a friend to you, while she takes you for granted as a friend. Arjun, while it is a perfectly normal reaction to be attracted to members of the opposite sex at this age, this is not the time to get involved with them. It will definitely tell on your studies. Today you are a top scorer. Girls like winners. If you were to lose marks, these very same girls, including Kajal, will not ever look at you..."



She wrote for a long time, even after Arjun had gone to sleep. It was nearly morning when she folded the papers and put them on his table.

Arjun was up when she woke up with a severe headache. Going into the kitchen, she found that he had already made his breakfast and eaten. Quietly, she began making her coffee. She wondered how he had reacted to the letter. The door to his room was closed. He said that he could concentrate better that way. Was he still dreaming about Kajal? She suddenly felt too weary to even think.

When she was reading the newspaper, Arjun came and sat down opposite her. She looked up. He made an effort to look at her eyes.

"I read the stuff you'd written. I want to assure you again that Kajal is just a good friend. In fact, she has a boyfriend too. The second thing is that I know my responsibilities and that I have to study well." He swallowed hard. "You don't have to worry about my concentration. I can chuck aside any other thought when I sit down to study." He looked away, as if unable to continue looking at her.

'You can chuck aside any thought other than that of Kajal's,' said his conscience. 'Oh shut up!' he silently whispered to it.



His mother was looking at him in that exasperating way that made him feel defenceless —it was as if she could peep right into his soul and lay it bare for scrutiny. He defiantly stared back. 'This time she will not guess my secret,' he vowed to himself. 'If she is clever, I am also equally clever.'

"If you have a few minutes, I want to tell you about a girl I knew long ago," his mother said, half to herself, so soft was her voice.

He didn't reply. She either didn't notice or ignored it, as she continued, "Let's call her Sangeeta. There was a boy in her neighbourhood, a couple of houses down the road, in fact. He, Rishi, was in the 10th standard and she in the first year of college. The two had several things in common— they both loved to read and write poetry, liked the songs of Talat Mahmood, found the smell of fresh earth romantic and enjoyed the thrill of a cricket or hockey match. They fought over trifles and laughed together at silly jokes. In short, they were friends—

great friends. She was his confidante, his counsellor and mentor. He did anything that she told him."

Arjun's mother paused before she continued, "Rishi, came over at all times of the day to her house; Sangeeta called up at all hours to chat with him. Their parents thought that the boy had found a sister in her. In fact, Rishi's mother often asked Sangeeta to advise him or ask him to do things, because he wouldn't listen to her.

"But there was another world that Sangeeta lived in — a world of fantasies and dreams, which was populated by gorgeous hunks and handsome beaus. She spoke aloud about her fantasies to Rishi. When she laughed at her own absurd fancies, he laughed too. If she was his confidante, she considered him her advisor too. She often took her troubles to him, complaints about her parents who didn't 'understand' her and so on."

Arjun sat up straighter. An incredulous look came into his eyes. 'Has she read my diary?' he wondered. No, he decided grudgingly. His mother wouldn't stoop to that. The 'old woman' was decent for all her out-of-date ideas. So why the story? 'She is making this up to stop me from being friends with Kajal,' he concluded at last, a hard look coming into his eyes. How old-fashioned can she be, in this day and age when half the boys in my class regularly date, he wondered!

His mother hardly noticed the emotions that flitted across his face. Had he taken the trouble to see it, he would have seen a faraway look in her eyes and the pain that was mirrored in it. She was thinking of a day long ago...

" 'Hey, you didn't show me this poem!' Sangeeta picked up the sheet of paper from Rishi's table.

" 'No! That is a surprise!' Rishi desperately lunged at it and in the ensuing scuffle Sangeeta was trapped by him between the wall and the table. She became conscious of his nearness, and could almost hear his heart go thud-thud. In a moment, she had recovered and managed to take the sheet home and read it. It was an ode in praise of the goddess of beauty—her.

"Sangeeta was troubled, especially since a handsome boy she often fantasised about, had entered her life. Suddenly, she found that she wanted to be left alone. She wanted some distance between herself and Rishi. But the boy wouldn't take a hint. He was a source of worry. He had begun dressing like a dandy and acting differently. That only made her feel suffocated by his demands and desperate to get away. What was worse, the demands increased.

" 'Sangeeta, you never come to watch the sunset these days,' he complained. Or, 'What do you think of the poem I wrote, about the garbage dump?' he asked.

" 'Not today, Rishi,' she invariably replied. Though she felt guilty putting him off, this reply became more and more frequent. Then she began avoiding him since she didn't know how to shake him off without hurting him. She couldn't make a clean break, because she still needed him to soothe her ego, to listen to her woes—but only when she had the time.

"Help came unexpectedly in the form of a transfer for his father to another city. A relieved Sangeeta bade him goodbye, even as Rishi held her hands in a vice-like grip and wept like a baby. He wrote dozens of letters which she threw away, unopened. Why she did it, she couldn't explain—not then, not now. Several months later the letters stopped coming... perhaps he thought that she had shifted house or left the town. But she never stopped dreading for years afterwards, the day he might land up at her doorstep.

"Where is he now? Would he have forgiven me for betraying a friendship? After all these years, I can still see the look in Rishi's eyes. Had I



been fair to him, to myself, by acting the way I had done?"

"Ma...it is okay...Rishi may not have been hurt at all..."

Arjun's voice brought her out of her reverie. He was sitting next to her and patting her shoulders awkwardly. She felt too dazed to even react to the fact that her teenage son was consoling her.

"How do you know? You never knew Rishi!" she blurted out.

"No, but I can tell you about how he might have have felt. Perhaps he felt hurt for a while and then got busy with his studies. Maybe he is a scientist or astronaut in NASA right at this moment. Think of that!"

She giggled before pulling herself up. Then the import of the whole thing struck her. She had revealed a secret locked in her heart after all these decades. She didn't care. Somehow, she felt free, as if she had thrown away a dead-weight that had hung round her neck all these years. Then her brows clouded again.

As if he guessed her thoughts, Arjun hugged her. "Don't worry, Ma. I will never be another Rishi. That is a promise!" His eyes were clear and for the first time in several months, his mother let go all her worries about her baby. Why! He was not a baby anymore at all...

OPEN MIND

SWEET SLUMBER

Eating, sleeping, dreaming, playing, laughing, crying... They come so naturally to us. What are these processes really, that our bodies respond to them so promptly? How often have you thought about why we react to something in a particular way—and then dismissed the thought? Now you need do so no more. Explore the mysterious psychological realms with ***Sonali Shankar*** *every month. Write to her about areas you want explored, or questions you want answered...*

SLEEP. SWEET SLEEP. Sweet, renewing, mysterious sleep... Something the body *and* the mind just cannot do without. What is sleep? Why do we spend almost a third of our lives, sleeping?

Such questions have intrigued us, as they did our ancestors, for many, many years. Today, some of sleep's age-old mysteries are being solved. In laboratories throughout the world, thousands of people 'sleep' attached to various gadgets, while researchers 'observe' them. These researchers, also called 'sleep watchers', use scientific instruments to record brain waves and muscle movements of their 'subjects'.

A typical experiment on 'sleep' in a laboratory would be conducted this way: The researcher tapes electrodes to the scalp, and to the corners of the eyes of his subject, the first being to measure brain waves and the latter to detect eye movements. Other devices record his heart rate, respiration rate and muscle tension. By recording the subject's brain waves and his muscle movements, by observing and awakening the subject from time to time, these researchers are trying to figure out and explain the many unanswered and mysterious questions about sleep.

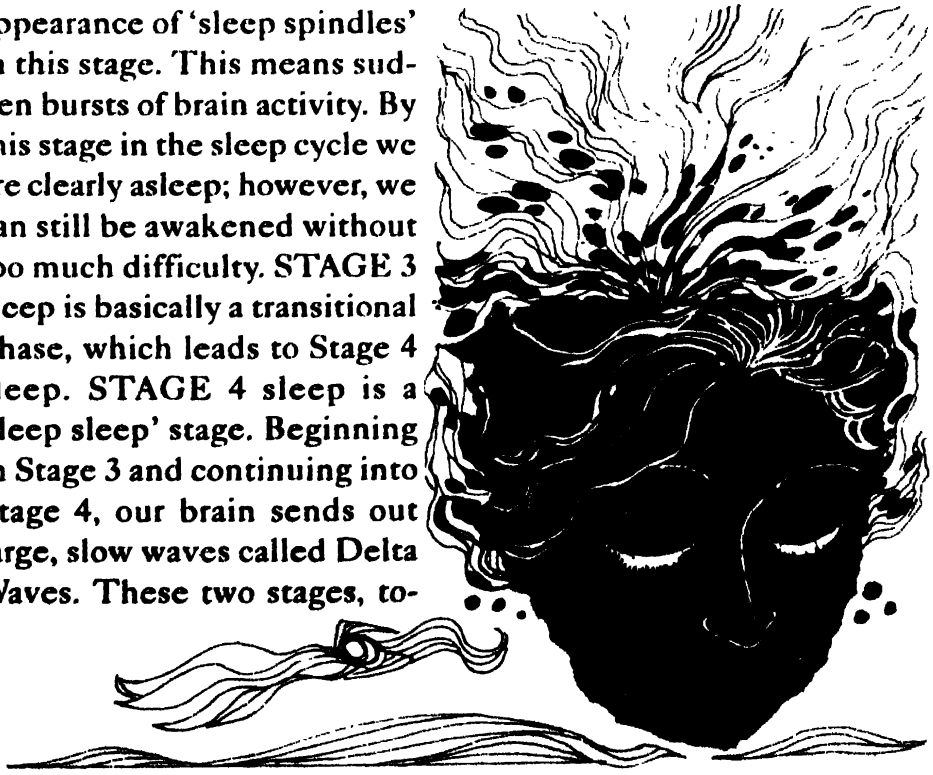


Did you know our bodies synchronise with the 24-hour cycle of day and night through a biological clock called the CIRCADIAN RHYTHM? This rhythm gets disrupted, on say, a flight overseas and we experience what is termed as 'jet lag'. This simply means delayed bodily effects felt after a long flight which happens mainly because we are awake when our biological clock is crying, "Sleep!"

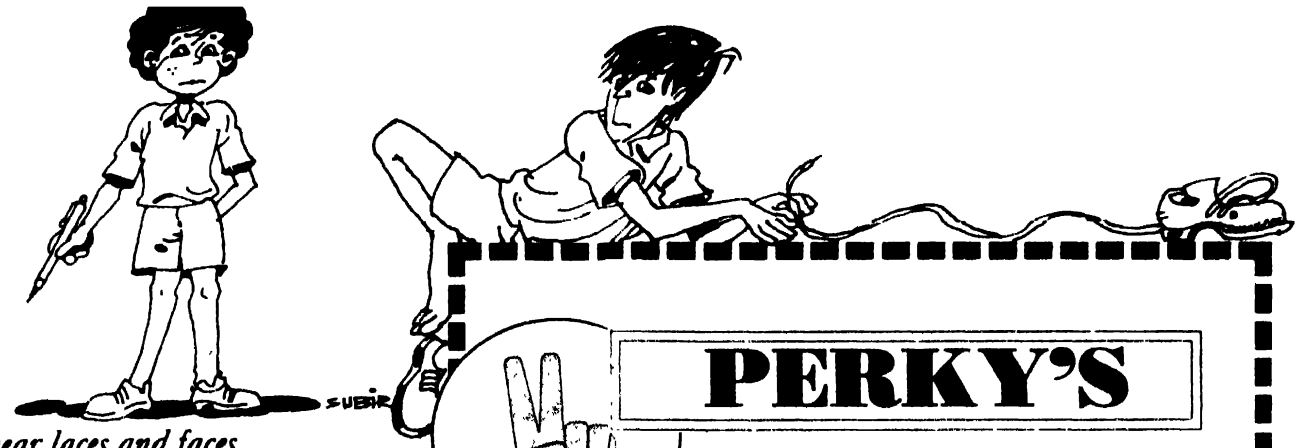
Findings reveal, when we sleep, we pass through a cycle which is made up of five distinct sleep stages. As we lie down on our beds and close our eyes, we gradually relax. Our breathing rate slows down and our brain waves also become slow and irregular. This is the first stage of the sleep cycle and it is known as STAGE 1 sleep. This stage lasts for about two minutes, and during this 'light sleep',we may suddenly have a sensation of falling (our bodies may suddenly jerk), or we may feel as though we are floating.

As we begin to relax more deeply, we move into STAGE 2 sleep. This stage lasts for about 20 minutes. Very often researchers have recorded the appearance of 'sleep spindles' in this stage. This means sudden bursts of brain activity. By this stage in the sleep cycle we are clearly asleep; however, we can still be awakened without too much difficulty. STAGE 3 sleep is basically a transitional phase, which leads to Stage 4 sleep. STAGE 4 sleep is a 'deep sleep' stage. Beginning in Stage 3 and continuing into Stage 4, our brain sends out large, slow waves called Delta Waves. These two stages, together are known as 'Delta Sleep' and this period lasts for around 30 minutes. During this phase, it is extremely difficult to be woken up. Some people talk, some people walk, in fact, at times small children even wet their beds during this Delta Sleep stage of the sleep cycle.

Almost an hour after we first fall asleep, something strange happens. Instead of continuing in deep slumber, we go back, up the sleep ladder. We return through Stages 2 and 3 and enter the most intriguing and fascinating sleep phase of all—STAGE 5 sleep, which is the REM STAGE, or the Rapid Eye Movement stage. In this stage, our heart beat increases, and our breathing becomes faster. This stage is referred to as the Rapid Eye Movement stage because here, every half minute or so, our eyes dart around in a momentary burst of activity. And, mind you, all this is happening behind closed eyelids. Many researchers feel the rapid eye movements announce the beginning of a dream. Does that mean the eye movements indicate we are 'watching' our dreams? Researchers feel this is not true. These eye movements actually reflect our highly active nervous system. Observations during this study have shown people rarely snore while they are dreaming, and that when REM sleep begins along with the beginning of dreams, people tend to stop snoring.



As the night continues, this sleep cycle repeats itself about every 90 minutes. However, the deep sleep stage keeps getting shorter and then gradually disappears; at the same time the REM sleep stage keeps getting longer. By the time morning arrives, 20 to 25 per cent of our average night's sleep—that is some 100 minutes—have been REM sleep, and REM sleep includes dreaming! This means when you say, "I never dream", you have actually spent about 600 hours a year experiencing some 1500 dreams! How's that for statistics?



PERKY'S

A LETTER TO YOU

Dear laces and faces,

Raghu was making a lot of fuss. But then Raghu always does. He makes a fuss and he makes faces and very often he does both at the same time—MF^2, sometimes, his MF^2s are for no reason; sometimes, very rarely, it is for a very very small reason. Like this time.

Raghu was MF^2ing because he had lost a shoe lace.

A shoe lace! Imagine! A twiddly bit of twine that ties up your shoe. Such a small twiny, sorry,tiny thing. Something you don't even think of for days on end. But Raghu did not let us forget his shoe lace, his lost shoe lace, even for a moment. Not a single moment for a whole week.

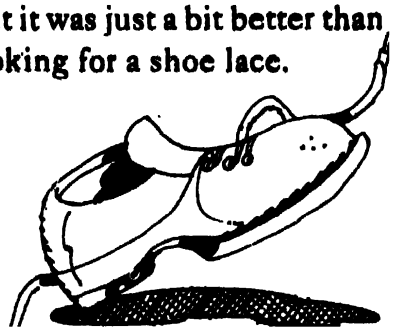
Let me tell you what happened. Apparently, Raghu lost his shoe lace in school sometime after the games period. He did not notice it immediately but he did notice it when he was drinking water. How you can notice a missing shoe lace when you are drinking water? Does he lie down with his feet near his face and drink water? Or does he suddenly remember his shoes and say 'Hello' to them while drinking water?

Anyway, in whatever way it happened, there was a huge 'No' from Raghu, and those of us who were also drinking water from our bottles found ourselves suddenly wet and our hands shaking. Raghu's 'No' has that kind of effect. In fact I think I could do a good piece of work on the effect of Raghu's 'No'. I could call it the Raghu 'No' effect and become quite famous. In fact, I could do it very scientifically and...

Anyway, so Raghu shouted 'No' and all our bottles of water danced in our hands and our shirt fronts got wet. Raghu went on, "My shoe lace! It's gone. It's disappeared. Look! I've got only one shoe lace. Look! Oh, where's the other one gone? Look for it. Look for it", he screamed.

How do you look for a shoe lace? Do you look for it on the ground? Or in the shoe? Or in somebody else's shoe? Or in somebody's hand? Or in the other shoe? And still Raghu went on screaming, "No! No! My shoe lace is gone. Oh, no! Look for it! Look for it!"

Thank goodness, we didn't have to look for it much because our Geogo teacher came in just as the bell rang and started reading out our test marks. (I'm sure you are not interested in this, are you?) But it was just a bit better than looking for a shoe lace.



Anyway the next thing that happened was that we were all flooded with notices.

MISSING BUT NOT LOST
ONE SHOE LASE
CONTAKT RAGHU
ONE SHOE LASE—
WHITE
FOR LEFT SHOE.



The notices were put in our desks, in our bags, they were stuck on bushes and stuffed into fences. They were even thrown into the staff room and pasted on the Principal's window. The whole school, in short, was supposed to be looking for a shoe lace. For a white, left shoe lace. Left, mind you.

Now I don't really know why the teachers did nothing for a whole week. I also don't know why Mr. Krish, the Principal, did not notice the notices immediately. But grown ups are funny and sometimes do not notice the same things as we do.

But we, in the class, were given no rest. Every spare moment, we were supposed to look for that stupid WHITE shoe lace. We couldn't play, we couldn't eat our tiffin properly, we had to keep looking. "I know it's here," said our torture master, Raghu. "It has to be here somewhere. Look! Look for it!"

I don't know how long this might have gone on if it had not been for Mr. Krish noticing the notices. And when Mr. Krish notices, he does it completely. Completely thoroughly.

He came into the class, it was Geography again, and asked for Raghu in that quiet, frightening way of his. Raghu stood up.

"Raghu," said Mr. Krish, "I believe you have lost a shoe lace. A left shoe lace?" You should have heard his voice when he said 'left'.

Raghu broke out with his chatter, "Yes, Sir. My shoe lace. I asked everybody to look for it. Have you found it, Sir?"

"No, Raghu, I have not," said Mr. Krish. "And I don't intend to look for it either. But what I want you to do is to look for all your notices and remove every one of them. Do you understand? Every one."

It was at this moment that the Geogo teacher suddenly shouted. "Raghu," he yelled. "Why in the name of latitudes, have you tied up your geography project notes with a dirty shoe lace? A shoe lace!"

Mr. Krish said nothing. Nor for once, did Raghu. But somebody laughed and soon we were all laughing. Laughing after a whole week.

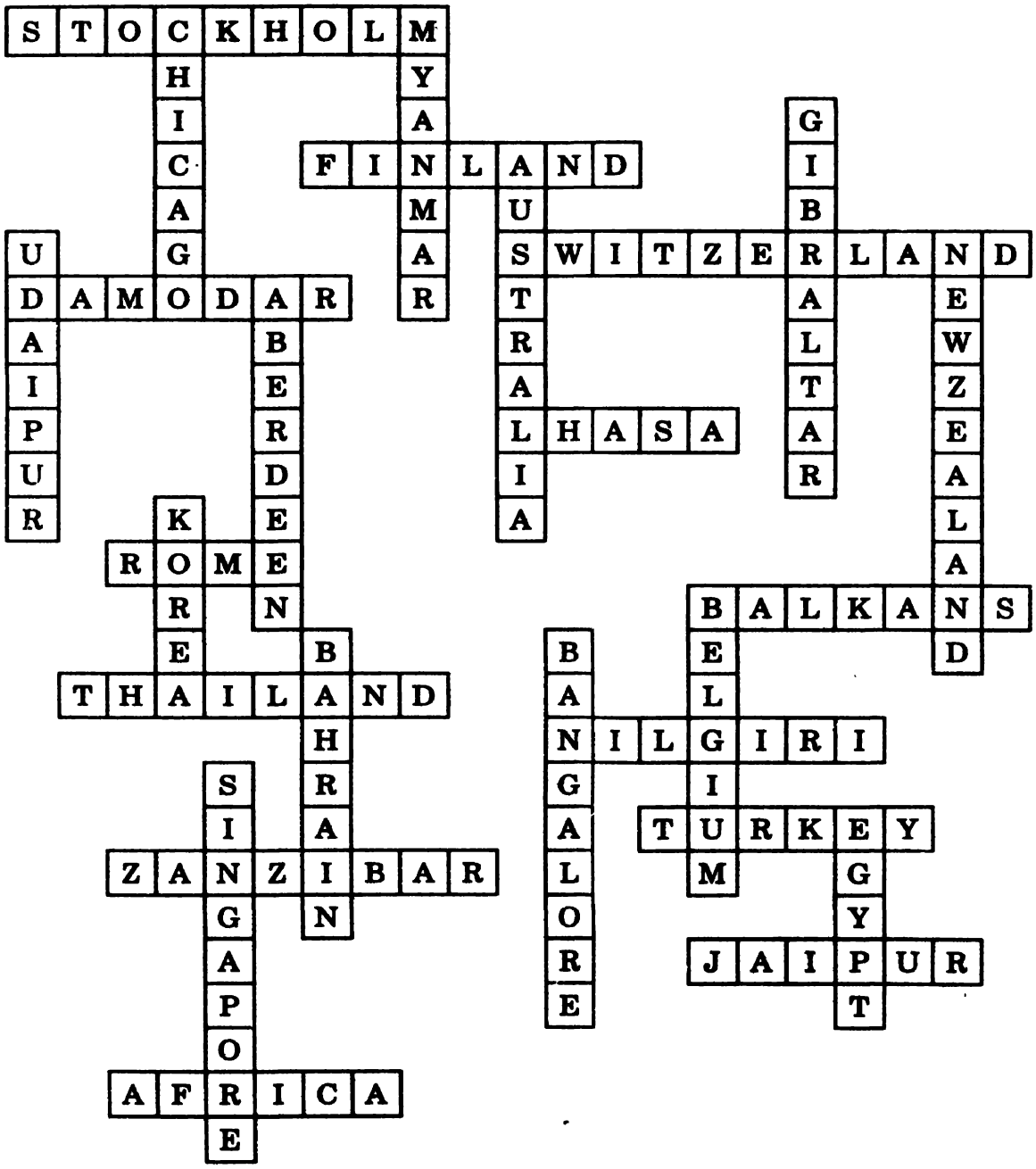
Left to laugh
Perky



Answers to CROSSROADS 14

'Sobriquetly' Yours!

S.S.



PANDA CLUB OF INDIA

Newsletter Vol. I No. 3

A big Hi, Pals!

Guess what! You flooded me with letters. You, my dear friends have overwhelmed me. Here's a big Panda hug to all of you. In just two months, I have come to enjoy your fond thoughts and words. I want to be your age, your size and play with you. Even if I am big, I will still come round to your city and together we'll have fun. So watch out for me, friends. Watch me on television (Doordarshan Metro Channel) and in CW to tell you when and where I'm going to be.

Remember, I had promised you bags full of surprises! Well, here's one. YOU COULD BE THE LUCKY ONE to be on the Panda Club shows with your friends and family! Check out the Panda Club Summer Bonanza below this letter.

I have to go now. Need a little hair cut and sprucing up what with Holi and its beginning to get warmer. You folks are lucky, you're not as fuzzy and furry as I am. But hey! Everyone's got to be what they got to be! And listen, have fun on Holi. Play the wet and dry colours. But don't be naughty. It's the spirit of the festival that you must enjoy. So, I wish you a splash of colours and lots of hugs. Love, yours always.

PANDA

PANDA CLUB SUMMER BONANZA!



Write a special Panda Club song
A song full of fun and joy,
Tape it on a video
with your family and friends
Just don't be shy!

It should be just a minute long
With a message at the end,
Anything you'd like to sing and say
To all your Panda Club friends.

So what's the delay! hurry up
For this Panda Club surprise,
Your tape must reach us, by 15th May sunrise.

Send your picture and write all about who you are,
We'll need all these details, to feature you as our winning star!

SPECIAL CONTEST RULES

This special offer is open to all Indian children 6-16 years. Record and tape your Panda Club song on a video cassette (VHS / 8mm / Hi-8) and send with written lyrics to Panda Club, C 2/62 II Floor, SDA, New Delhi-110016, before or on May 15,1997. Panda Club decisions are final.

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Remember Rimba's Island on Tuesdays at 5.30 p.m. on DDII
Colour the picture and identify the characters.



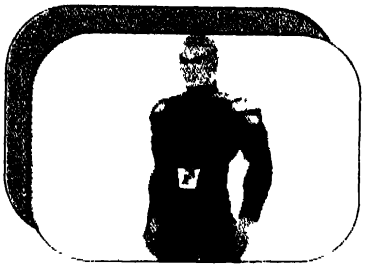
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CONGRATULATIONS WINNERS!

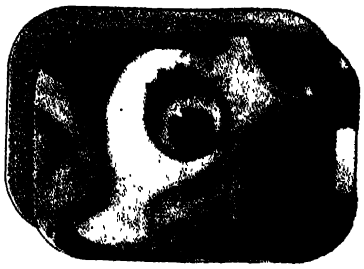
Out of 4082 entries sent in for the Jigsaw Puzzle in the February issue of CW, our computer has picked out the following four winners:

1. G.Sunil from Vijayawada
2. Lavanya Ramnath from Chennai
3. Prerna Modi from New Delhi
4. Amritha Vijayan from Kanpur

You will receive an exciting Dennis colouring book and notebook from *STIC*!



Monday 5.30 P.M. on DD II—FLASH GORDON : On a vital mission to save planet Earth from 'Ming the Merciless', Flash Gordon makes a rocket journey to the planet Mongo. Join the adventures of Flash Gordon.



Tuesday 5.30 P.M. on DD II— RIMBA'S ISLAND : Six lively, lovable, colourful costumed animal characters who dwell deep in the idyllic rain forest, share their joys and learn from one another catchy songs and simple stories—(dubbed in Hindi)



Thursday 5.00 P.M. on DD II— SUPERHUMAN SAMURAI SYBER SQUAD : Sam Collins, a video game champion and leader of a teenage garage band, fights an alien warlord 'Kilokahn' who has infected the digital world with monster "megaviruses."

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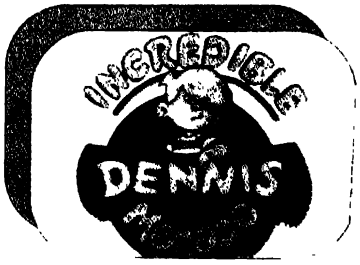
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Thursday 5.30 P.M. on DD II— PHANTOM :
The legendary Lord of the jungle— Phantom, is incredible. Phantom uses the secrets taught by the natives of the deep woods to fight and conquer crime.



Saturday 6.00 P.M. on DD II— DENNIS THE MENACE : Irrepressible Dennis and his unwilling best friend, the grumpy Mr Wilson will enthral you with their hilarious antics and send you into splits



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Agila Giriraj Kumar
Illustrations :
Ajanta Guhathakurta



THE RESULTS of the first revision exam had been announced. As Praveen had expected, he had scored full marks in Computer Science and Maths, nineties in the other sciences and barely passed in the rest. His teachers had already asked him to pull up his socks.

There was silence at home as *Appa* skimmed through the mark list. "You have never ever brought home a report like this," he remarked. "Even in the quarterly exam you got above 85 in all the subjects. What is happening, Praveen? There is no use getting full marks in some subjects if you fail in others. What if the Board sets a difficult paper in even one of these other subjects? Have you ever thought of what will happen if you fail? Be a little more responsible."

Stung, Praveen replied, "I am being responsible, *Appa*. I wake up early to avoid Sumanth's music..."

"Don't tell me we are back to that again."

"Yes, we are, *Appa*! I've tried everything possible. I asked Sumanth at school to play his stereo a little softly. That fat lump claimed that as long as his father paid the rent, it was his right to do anything he wanted!"

"Oh, no," said *Amma* anxiously. "Did you get into a fight?"

"No, *Amma*," returned Praveen. "I wanted to hit him, but I didn't. I knew it would upset you. But don't you think it is time you put *my* future before good neighbourly relations?"

"When I was your age," said *Appa*, "I lived right next to a music teacher's house. All day I had to listen to students practising. After a while, it stopped bothering me."

"If it was all that *Sa Re Ga Ma* stuff, even I can ignore it."

"Classical music is not boring. It is actually melodious and beautiful," reprimanded *Amma*.

Appa added, "Much better than all that metal clanging and creaking you call music! Not to mention so-called singers screeching out one word over and over again!"

"See, you can't stand it. Just tell them firmly to stop it. This is your house, after all."

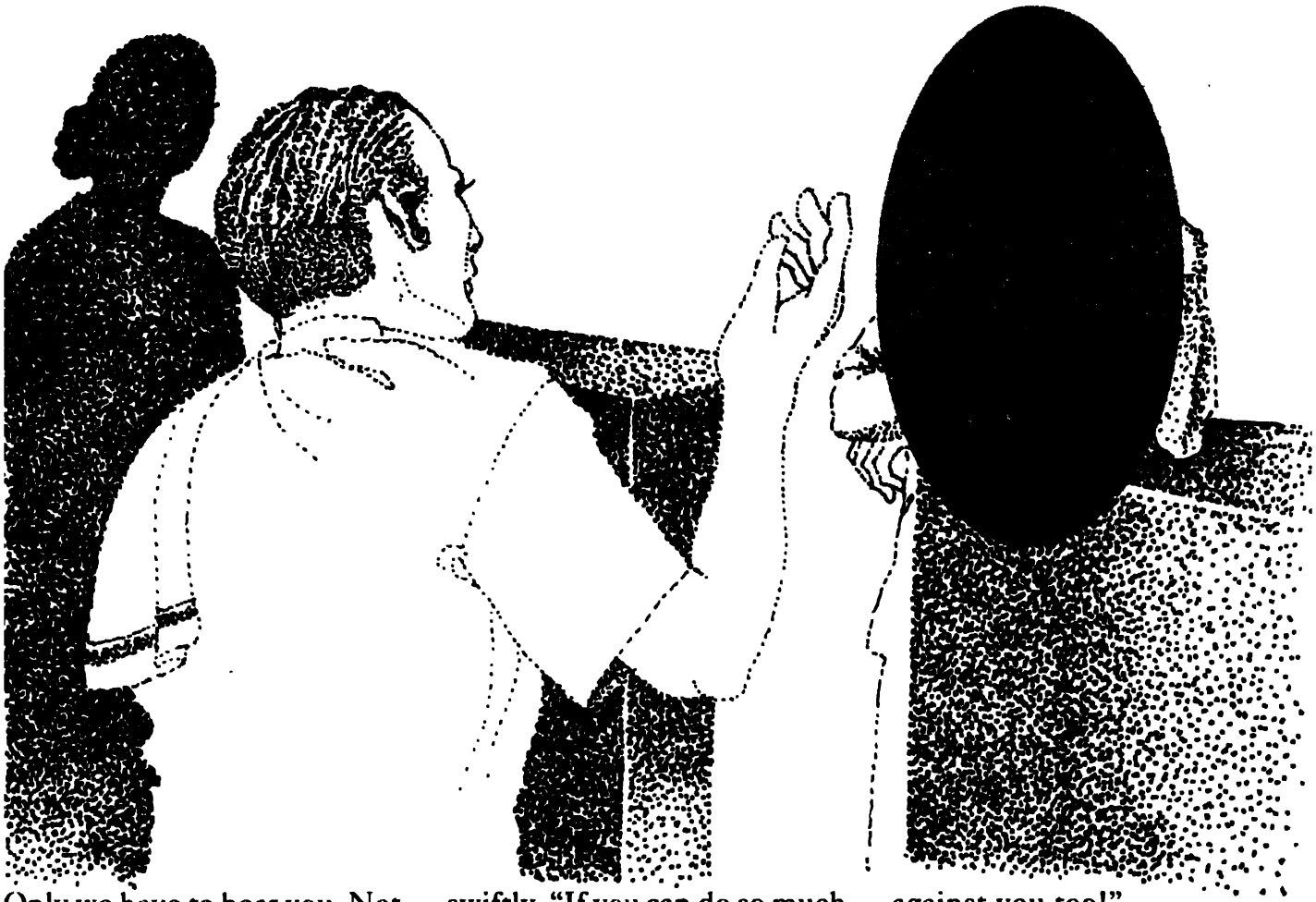
Amma and *Appa* looked at each other. Then *Amma* said, "If you say something that puts them in the wrong, they will start searching for something that puts us in the wrong. Then we will want to retaliate. And tension will gradually escalate. That is human nature. If you ignore provocation in the first place, you can avoid a lot of trouble and live in peace."

Praveen was not impressed. "So you are going to sacrifice my future and live in peace with your tenants. Even though I might fail, you are not going to help me. You will only yell at me!"

"Stop being so obstinate! You are blaming your lack of concentration on Sumanth."

"I'm not obstinate. If I was," shouted Praveen, "would I get 100 in Maths?"

"That is my point exactly! If your concentration for the science subjects is not affected why can't you concentrate on the Humanties too? All you need is the will. And stop shouting the house down.



Only we have to hear you. Not the people upstairs. Be a little more considerate about other people's feelings!"

"Only I have to be considerate. Not Sumanth. Have I ever played rock music on our stereo like him? Since you don't like it, I listen to it with ear phones."

"Who bought you those earphones, Praveen?" demanded *Appa*. Praveen stood in speechless fury as *Appa* continued, "Though we don't like rock music, why did we give you the money for the cassettes? Because we understand your feelings!"

For a moment Praveen was taken aback. But he rallied swiftly, "If you can do so much for me, why can't you do one more little thing?"

"This is different. Wanting to listen to the same music your friends listen to is a reasonable wish. We fulfilled it. What you are asking for now is unreasonable. The music Sumanth plays is the same. You are saying that with that music blaring you can concentrate on science but not art subjects. You are the person who has to change. Not the music!"

"Why can't I get through to you? You are determined not to understand," groaned Praveen in despair.

"That is a charge I can level against you too!"

"How can you say that?" demanded Praveen. "I am very understanding about your feelings. So many guys in my class smoke. Do I? Two or three even take drugs! Why don't I? Because it will make you unhappy."

"We will be unhappy because cigarettes and drugs are harmful to your health. This big sacrifice you claim to have made is not for our sake but for yours—for your health and welfare."

Realising he was losing the argument Praveen dropped that subject. "Coming back to the point," he said. "You are not going to do anything to

help me."

"I'm only saying that at some point, I have to make a difference between legitimate requests and childish tantrums. And right now..."

"And right now I'm throwing a childish tantrum," flashed Praveen. "Thanks. Now I know your real opinion of me! You don't have any respect for me and my feelings. I used to think you are the best parents in the world. I was so proud of you. Now I think you are the worst. If I fail I'll blame you, only you!"

Turning, he ran into his room, slamming the door. His parents looked at each other helplessly. "I still think we are right. But will he ever understand?" said *Appa* worriedly.

Behind the door, Praveen was still fuming. 'I'm not asking much, am I? They are my parents. It is their duty to fulfil my requests. Especially now! How many guys run so many errands for their parents? I pay electricity bills and telephone bills standing for hours in queues, while my friends play cricket. They deserve a son like Sumanth who won't lift a finger in the house. Have I ever slammed a door before now? Just because they say it is bad manners. I hate this place. It's like a prison here! All work, no freedom, no help, no understanding!' he raged on.

Ever since he had first handled a computer, he had loved it. The way the computer responded to his touch was pure magic to him. His sole ambition in life was to become a computer engineer and work with computers all his life.

Science had always come to him without effort. The Humanities needed hard work. But he was willing to slave over his difficult subjects. So he was always within the top three ranks in class. Now in the tenth, his parents and teachers expected him to do very well. And Praveen was confident he would fulfil those expectations and glide into the computer science group easily.

Until trouble descended two months ago. Their tenants upstairs, the Reddys, bought their son, Sumanth, a new stereo system. Praveen had never really liked Sumanth, who was spoilt and insolent. But he had managed to stay polite.

Sumanth played his stereo at full blast whenever he was home. And Praveen found it difficult to concentrate when his favourite numbers spilled out at top volume.

How could he remember which State had what type of soil when a part of his mind (a large part, in fact) was singing, "I am all out of love" along with Air Supply.

As a whole year's portions were completed in barely six months to facilitate three revision exams, Praveen found himself in trouble with the Humanities.

A gentle tap on the door put an end to his musings. It was his mother asking him to have his dinner. He turned away saying, "I'm not hungry."

"In case you are hungry later on, I'll leave some mushroom fried rice in the casserole," she murmured and went away.

Waiting only till all the lights went out in the house, Praveen dashed out and devoured the rice because he was really very hungry. As he ate, a thought came to him, 'If they won't help me, I will have to help myself.'

Studying at friends' houses didn't help because invariably he ended up teaching them Science or Maths. Going to the nearby park was of no use as the boys played cricket there, and cricket was as distracting as rock.

He had to do something here, at home—something that would stop Sumanth from playing his stereo. What could he do? And then, all at once, it came to him. The solution was simple and it was right under his nose! Why hadn't he thought of it before?

After working out a few details, he set his alarm clock and fell asleep, at peace at last. When the alarm rang at four a.m. he sprang up. Padding

across to the cupboard where his father kept his tool kit, he collected a few things. Then he opened the back door softly. Going round to the side of the house, he unlocked the electricity meter box. Working by torchlight, he swiftly pulled out the fuse carrier. With his father's pliers, he wrenched out the fuse wire and pushed the fuse carrier back in place. He dashed back into the house, switched on the emergency lamp and settled down to determined study. He made steady, painstaking progress.

At six, his mother went into the kitchen. He could hear her exclamation of dismay as she tried the switches. She came up to him asking, "When did the power go off?"

"Around four-fifteen. Shall I check the fuse? I didn't go earlier because it was very dark."

His mother stared after him in surprise. After the row the previous night, she had expected a string of bitter complaints about the inconvenience, not this helpful behaviour. With a mischievous smile Praveen opened the meter box, closed it and reported back, "The fuse is okay. Let us check with the neighbours." As if in answer, a mixer whirred loudly next door.

"Something is wrong with our line alone. I'll call the Electricity Board." Sauntering past his bewildered mother, he picked up the phone. Pressing some digits at random, he informed the sleepy voice that answered that they had a power cut. Even as the sleepy voice stuttered that he had got the wrong number, he gave his address, insisted they attend to it soon and rang off.

Smothering a grin, he told his father that the Electricity Board had promised to send somebody. Hiding his surprise, his father thanked him. Then Praveen studied with total concentration. In between Mrs. Reddy came down to ask his mother if she had called up the Electricity Board. Praveen had. Satisfied, Mrs. Reddy went away. And Praveen studied on in blessed peace. Periodically, he called up the 'Electricity Board'. By evening he was more confident of his geography and over half his history. He decided it was time to relax to a little music. As soon as his mother went out to buy vegetables for dinner, he slipped round to the meter box and replaced the damaged fuse with a spare. Almost immediately, the stereo upstairs roared to life. Happily Praveen lay back relaxing to heavy metal.

When his mother came in, he told her that the Electricity Board men had repaired a loose contact in the nearby post.

Allowing very reasonable gaps, he repeated this trick a couple of days more. As it had

not occurred to anyone to suspect him, Praveen was able to pull it off successfully. As he continued to study very early in the morning, his marks in the next two revision exams kept improving.

The public exams were over. Praveen came home after the last paper, glowing with relief and confidence. *Appa* was moved to comment, "After the first revision exam, I was so afraid you might not look like this after the finals. Thank goodness you applied yourself."

'This is the time to tell them,' decided Praveen burdened by his own guilt. "Don't thank 'goodness', *Appa*. Thank me. When you didn't help me, I helped myself. I pulled out the fuse and created those power cuts, so that Sumanth couldn't play his stereo. I had to do it since my future was at stake here!"

His half-boastful, half-defiant speech which hid his guilt and fear produced the desired effect. Both his parents looked totally startled.

His mother shook her head saying, "I thought you were being so helpful. All the time you were fooling us!"

Praveen's head hung a bit, but he lifted it saying, "I wouldn't have done it if you had helped me out."

Appa's face was serious as he asked Praveen to sit down. "We'll come to the fuse pulling later. But first, have you ever wondered why I refused to talk to the Reddys for you? Surely you don't think our tenants are more important to us than you are? The reason is different. Do you think that to become a successful computer engineer, all you have to do is study hard? Think again! Life today is a rat race. To be successful you have to overcome so many obstacles. If we keep solving all your problems for you, you would always be dependent on somebody to help you out. And if nobody shouldered your burden, you would fail. We did not want that to happen. We wanted you to find a way out yourself—to become self-reliant. That is why we refused to help you."

"But couldn't you have done it some other time? Why now, when my whole future depended on my marks?"

"This situation was a challenge for you with time so short. That is why we left you to deal with it alone, hoping desperately you would not disappoint us. And you did us proud. From now on I will regard you and treat you, not as a promising boy who is yet to grow up, but as a resourceful young man, who I can depend on to negotiate every tricky bend in life successfully."

Praveen listened with mixed feelings. While a trace of resentment towards his parents lingered, it was overshadowed by a feeling of confidence and joy that he had gained his father's respect.

But *Appa* was speaking, "Every act in life has consequences. Whatever be the reason, you caused inconvenience to the people upstairs for three whole days. I think they deserve an apology. I'll leave it to you to handle this situation too. Good luck, son."

Praveen's face had begun to glow but at the mention of owning up, he sobered. Squaring his shoulders, he climbed the stairs. Halfway up he met Mr. Reddy coming down. "Hullo, Praveen! How did your exams go?"

"Fine, Uncle!" he mumbled. "Uncle, I have to talk to you!" At Mr. Reddy's enquiring expression, Praveen rushed into speech, "You remember those full day power cuts we had? They were not real power cuts. I pulled the fuse out."

"Why?" asked Mr. Reddy in angry surprise.

"Uncle, Sumanth kept playing his stereo too loudly. I couldn't concentrate on my studies. That's why."

"You should have come to us instead of all this fuse pulling," Mr. Reddy said angrily.

"I asked Sumanth to turn down the volume. He refused. My parents said it was wrong to make this a big issue by telling you about it. My exams were coming and I really

didn't know what else to do. I'm really sorry, Uncle. If only..."

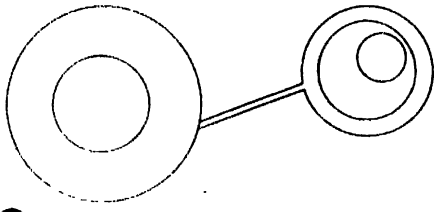
He stopped at the expression on Mr. Reddy's face. Anger had given way to laughter.

"To tell you the truth, Praveen, I rather enjoyed those three days of peace and relief from that rattling and grinding they call music now-a-days. Well...okay... considering it was your public exam...we'll forget about it this time. Let bygones be bygones. Just don't do it again." Clapping Praveen on the shoulder, he went on his way.

Praveen stared at his receding back, stunned. He had been let off the hook so lightly! Grown-ups were hard to figure out!

Filled with relief and joy, he dashed down the stairs to his wonderful family and a home which was a prison no more!

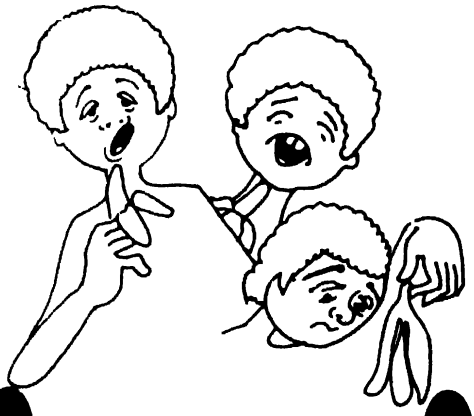
Hey Riddle Diddle!



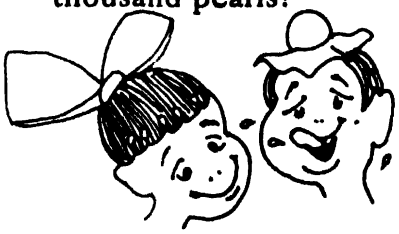
What is this?



What do Pygmies do with banana skins?



Take away my green coats,
Then chops away my curls,
All kids just love to eat
My dress made of thousand pearls!



A moving thing which neither dies nor breaks?



What is purple, has sixty legs and big teeth?



Only five letters make my name,
And I float high in the sky,
When I sqeeze out water,
The frogs are happy, oh my!



What is it which belongs to you, but others use it more than you?



Contributed and Illustrated by Ajanta Guhathakurta

WHY CHILDREN'S WORLD?

In 1968 when the late K. Shankar Pillai, 'Shankar', the founder-editor of *Children's World* launched the magazine; he chose to call it 'Children's World', because the magazine was for, by and of the children of the world. Quite literally so, because the magazine was an offshoot of the Shankar's International Children's Competition in Painting and Writing. There were a number of literary entries deserving publication although all could not be awarded. 'Why not publish them independent of the *Shankar's Children's Art Number* (a compendium of all the prize-winning articles and paintings)?' thought Shankar. And thus *Children's World* came into being, delighting children the world over, even as it showcased their literary talents.

Thirty years since, CW is still very much an international presence. Here's just one example how:

"For more than 20 years, SIRS has been republishing selected articles from news media worldwide for distribution to schools and libraries. During these years, we have expanded our product line to meet the constant demand for current information and have evolved our formats to keep pace with technological developments. What hasn't changed is SIRS' commitment to quality, objectivity and comprehensiveness. Because of this, SIRS has established and maintained a reputation as a leader in the library industry.

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And these are the articles taken from CW that appear on the SIRS electronic data-base.

1. "Dinosaurs: The Extinct Giant Reptiles" by G. Ratna Kumar (2 illustrations B.G. Varma) July 1994
2. "Tezu and Neenu's Trees" by Vandana Khare (text only) October 1994
3. "July, When the Rains Come" by O.P. Bhagat (text only) July 1995
4. "Exit Rains Enter Autumn" by O.P. Bhagat (text only) September 1995
5. "Life" by Radhika Joneja (text only) November 1995
6. "Lamps for Glow and Gaiety" by O.P. Bhagat (text only) November 1995
7. "Unquestionably Funny" (text only) November 1995
8. "Water, Water Everywhere" by Thangamani (text only) April 1996
9. "Tall Tales" by Thangamani (text only) May 1996
10. "Getting to know Swapnasundari" by Surpriti Sethi, (text only) November 1996
11. "What a Pest!" by Thangamani (text only) December 1996
12. "The Christmas Feeling in India" by DD and TM (text only) December 1996
13. "A Mountain of Facts" by Thangamani (text only) January 1997

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The Daddy Doll

Story : Usha Bajracharya Verma ● Illustrations : Subir Roy

WHEN I WAS a little girl, a father was like a light in the refrigerator. Every house had one, but no one really knew what either of them did once the door was shut. My Dad left for work every morning and when he returned late at night, he was glad to see everybody. He opened difficult jam jars when others failed to. He was the only one in the house who was not afraid to venture out into the vast darkness of the night.

When he cut himself shaving, no one kissed it to make it better or got excited about it. No Mom would fuss and put antiseptic or a bandaid on it.

It was an understood fact that when it rained, he brought the car round to the front door. When anyone was sick, he took us to the paediatrician and purchased the medicines.

He certainly kept busy enough. He set mouse-traps and dumped the fat rats. He



fixed the front door knob so that tiny hands would not get stuck as we ran in and out at least a thousand times in a day. He oiled my roller skates so they would turn faster. When I got my bicycle, he ran alongside until I got the hang of balancing it.

He signed my report cards, permission slips and wrote my letter of leave. He loved photography and took many snaps; however, he was never in a single one. He tightened Mom's pressure cooker handles whenever they got loose or fixed a new light bulb when an old one got fused.

I was afraid of everyone else's father except my own. Mine was always patient and understanding. Once I made him some tea, but it was only sugar and water served in my China Doll cup and saucer set. He sipped it as he sat on my tiny chair and said that it was delicious although he looked most uncomfortable as he said so. Apparently, he was lying.

Whenever I played house, the mother doll had numerous chores to do. However, I never knew what to do with the daddy doll, so I'd say, "I'm going to the office now," and with that dumped him in my wardrobe.

When I was eleven years old, my father never got up one morning to go to work. He had to be rushed to the hospital in an ambulance and passed away two days later, of heart failure they said.

After that there were a lot of people in our house. With their sympathies, they brought us food and other things to eat. Never did we have so much to eat nor company over.

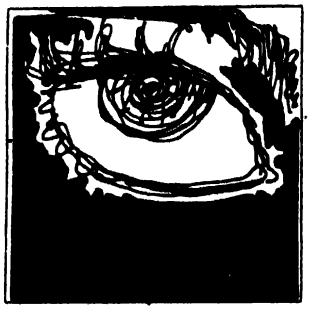
I went to my bedroom, rummaged in the wardrobe for the daddy doll. When I found him, I dusted him off and put him on my bed.

He never did anything significant like Mom Nevertheless, I did not know that his leaving would hurt so intensely. And even today, it still does...



THE GIRL WITH FOUR HANDS

Story : Priya Vasudevan **Illustrations : Beejee**



THE ROCK had always loomed over the hill as far back as I could remember. There was a story behind it. Kal*akka* had told me just after I came here; when the eleventh son of an eleventh son would be born, then all the seven tanks around would be full, and the rock would burst and there would be a treasure underneath. Until then, the rock stood proud and alone on top of the hill. Everyone avoided it. Even the quarry owner. Bare, grey stretches gleamed all over the hill but near the rock, the ground was still green and birds would nest in the cluster of smaller rocks that surrounded it. Now, the rock cast its dark shadow in the afternoon light and I walked on past it.

I could tell *Amma* that it was the stick insect's fault but she would never believe me. *Amma*, my serious, practical *Amma*, could never understand how I could watch the light stain clouds with red and purple and underline them with gold. Just standing and staring with my mouth open, she said, while everyone else hurried through their evening chores. Insects were for ignoring unless they had to be killed, like ants and cockroaches. Playing and dreaming were not words known to my mother. *Amma* doesn't know a lot of words though she can read and write, a little. I do not know how to read but I know how to dream. That's what I do best. That's



what I do, the whole day, every day. *Amma* must have known how to dream once, for she called me *Poovirundhavalli* (the creeper that has blossomed).

Amma used to work in the city with *Appa*. She left the village when she was very young. She helped her mother carry loads on the building sites. That's how she met *Appa*, who was a *maistry* (a supervisory worker). They got married and worked together. *Amma* was very brave. She could climb very high. I can climb trees higher than any boy. *Anna* (my brother) and I were born in the city. When *Appa* died, *Amma* bought some land in our village with the money the contractor gave her. *Anna* looks after it.

I love *Anna* but that *Anni* (sister-in-law)! I refused to talk to her and she didn't talk to me. *Amma* never took my side against her. She only signalled with her eyes to be quiet. What can *Anni* do? *Anna* would not have thrown us out, his own mother and sister. She was the outsider but *Amma* didn't understand. "Your tongue will get you in trouble one of these days," she said. "We may be mother and son, but our tongues and stomachs are not one," she said. *Amma* always talks in proverbs—she thinks they are written in stone. When I grow up, I am going to find the perfect answer to that one.

I love all animals. That's why *Anna* lets me milk the cow and buffaloes and take the goats to graze. I had names for all the goats and the cows and buffaloes. The cow is a foreign cow. I called her Lakshmi. The buffaloes are Shenbagam and Maragatham. I did not let *Amma* kill Maragatham's bull calf. It had a blunt, black nose just like a naughty little boy. I did not eat for two days when *Anna* made up his mind to sell it to the butcher. That is, I did not eat at home. I ate the bananas from Kuppan's field but *Anna* did not know. *Anni* said, "Listen to that stubborn girl in such matters, and we'll soon have to tie a wet cloth round our stomachs. Don't carry her round on your head. Sell the calf. It's just another mouth to feed. The price is good."

Anna didn't sell the calf. It's a fine big bull now.

My problem was I could never remember to count the goats, but that day I did, faithfully, calling them by name—Malli, Jaathi, Kanakambaram, Mullai, Roja, Sambarthi, Kadambam... We had to walk through Kuppan's field, past the rock, then the common ground, over to the forest. We had a system, the goats and I, and it was like a game we played with the forest guard. I'd wait until he went on his tour, then we'd slip in and I'd climb a tree, look for wild berries and collect sticks for firewood. The goats would eat to their heart's content until the guard returned. Then I'd shoo them all back to the common again.

That day, we got into the forest. Then I saw the wild fowl and I just had to catch it. *Amma* loves wild fowl. She would keep it and may be we'd have chicks soon. I wanted to see *Amma* smile. So I went after the wild fowl. Wild fowl are very smart. They can keep still and then they run suddenly. The wild fowl ran away. Then I saw the stick insect and the guard came back and took the goats away.

Amma was not always like this. Once, when we were small, I found two small mice almost drowning in a puddle of rainwater. I took them and put them on the roof of our hut. I didn't tell *Amma* in case she scolded me. *Amma* found them half dead from the heat when I had run off to play. She fed them boiled rice, grain by grain, until they had regained their strength, and then she set them free. *Anna* and I caught them as they ran and I pierced the ear of one with a ring. It looked so pretty with its ear-ring, but it gave a small snuffle and then went stiff in my palm. My ears still ring with the slap *Amma* gave me. Then she helped us bury it.

I think *Anni* changed everything. Whoever thought that slim, smiling girl would become such a bad-tempered, complaining witch as soon as she stepped through the door? She stole my *Amma's* smile and I can



never forgive her for that. I never spoke to *Anni*, only to *Amma* and *Anna*.

I can hear *Anni's* voice in my head, "Half witted idiot! Can't you even count up to ten?"

I had to hang my head. I didn't know what *Amma* would say.

"*Aie*, Valli, how many will you leave behind today?" the guard had said that morning. I had counted them faithfully; there were ten. "You won't find any today!"

I had laughed. Now here I was, dragging my feet home with only four goats, and the rest in the guard's pen.

I knew *Anni* would say something. She always did. But what I couldn't bear was *Amma's* face. When she was displeased, *Amma* never scolded. I think because *Anni* scolded so much. She simply shut in her face and turned away whenever I made a mistake, and I could feel a pain in my stomach, every time that happened. I could never bear *Amma* to be displeased with me. What would she say, *Amma*, my *Amma*. My feet dragged slower as my *Amma*'s house came in sight.

I shooed the goats into their yard and slipped through the door. *Amma* turned, "Valli, back so soon?" Then, seeing my face, "What happened? What did you do?"

Anni was washing clothes near the well so I told *Amma*.

Amma closed her eyes.



"Every time you lose some goats in the forest. Six goats, what will your brother say! Useless girl, can't you just think? Why should you always put me to shame even in this?" She took up a thick piece of firewood. I didn't wait for more. I just turned and ran.

I could hear the searchers and I burrowed deeper into the hay. No one thought of looking in the hay stack in the fallow field. 'Let them search,' I thought. Even *Amma* had got tired of me. I stayed there till the cicadas fell quiet and I heard the music.

The fair hadn't started as yet. The giant wheel was still wet with dew. I went over and touched it. I'd never been to a fair before. Only watched it from a distance. The music was loud, strident, demanding. "Come to the fair," it said.

I knew from the reek, the growls and grumbles that the next tent had animals. I'd heard the village boys talking of this. Snarling, wild animals in cages just big enough for them to lash the bars with their tails—lions, tigers, wild cats, tied-up cranes. There were a few stragglers walking around. No one looked at me, a gawky village girl. An old woman was sitting outside the stall, sipping tea and eating a bun.

"Hey, girl, come here!" she called. I went over but kept a safe distance. "Go and get yourself a tea and bun from the stall over there. Tell him I'll pay." She must have seen the hunger in my face. We sat down, sipping and eating, eating and sipping in silence.

"Come in," she said and I slipped into the 'showline' as easily as that.

Gangamma is a great woman. She bullies everyone, even the Manager. She was once a great

teller of stories. Sita, Draupadi, Kaikeyi, she has been them all. I think when you have been someone great, even for just an hour, some of that greatness stays inside you and Gangamma has been many great people. Now she just stays around helping to cook for the fair and doing some jobs, healing colds and stomach pains and giving advice. Gangamma knows many tricks.

In the first week, I just ran around at her command. In the second week she began teaching me some simple tricks which she had learnt at her grandmother's knee. She comes from a long line of show folk. "Good girl," she said at the end of that week. "You learn fast." I told her I had no parents and my brother ill-treated me. She didn't ask me anything more.

*

Acchan looked up at the sky while he was pouring out the tea from his kettle. No smile, just a nod at my greeting and back to looking at the sky. Shanthi walks up and dumps her baby on my lap. Every morning I amuse it while she helps Gangamma cook our morning meal. Then it's back to work.

Show folk hate the rain. Rain means empty stalls and early pack-ups. I could hear the lions roaring so I took the baby to the animal cages. The elephant is sweet. Balayya got them cheap from a circus. Though their cages are small he has kept them clean and feeds them well. Still, this is not the life they are used to and they complain all the time. He has lions, elephants, a pheasant, a porcupine, a python and two monkeys. To see them the gawking villagers pay one rupee!

I like this life; people come to see me! They clap at my tricks and pay money to see me. I am somebody, 'Girl with four hands', but I think of *Amma* a lot. *Amma*, how anxious she must have been after I left, how worried she must have been about her thoughtless girl's future. I want her to know, I can take care of myself. I am somebody. Even *Anni*, seen with the different eyes of distance and time, seems just a tired, young woman struggling with never-ending work.

The *chappati* stone and rolling pin to be set out, the flour and water to be kneaded into dough, I had barely ten minutes to get ready. I open the tin trunk and take out my props—the pump stove which is filled with kerosene, the match box, the needle and thread, the griddle, the mirror, the *bindis* and comb. Balan hisses, "Shall I begin collecting tickets?"

I nod, concentrating, getting into the mood. Who would I be today? Sita, I decide, in the forest, keeping house, waiting for Rama and Lakshmana.

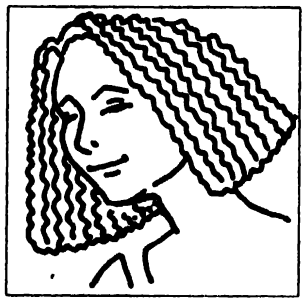
I close my eyes. Who knows, maybe there will be in the crowd today, someone from the show line who will see the great artiste in me. "Look at me," my eyes say. "Look at me." With my hands behind my back, I begin the show—dressing myself, rolling *chappatis*, cooking them, all with my feet.

I look over the heads in the crowd, Sita waiting. "Look at me." Then I see her slip in with the crowd. There is more grey in her hair; she looks sad. *Anni* is with her. She sees me at the same time. Can a person cry and smile at the same time? "Look at me, *Amma*," my eyes say while the tears run down my cheeks and hers. "Look at me." Sita is forgotten. For once, I am glad just to be me, Valli, going home to *Amma*.



Our Mona

Story :
Homagni Chaudhuri
Illustrations :
Ajanta Guhathakurta



IT WAS FOUR THIRTY in the afternoon. Eleven-year-old Monica was busy helping mother set the table for tea. Her elder brother had carried in the jug and the glasses. He sat with the satisfied smile of having done his share of the work. Grandmother sat in a corner crocheting a table mat. Actually tea would be only for Grandmother and Mother, but the children would have the delicious snacks. Father, Bikash De, rarely returned before seven, and the youngsters, back from school, could not wait that long.

Mother brought in the *dum aloo* from the kitchen and placed it on the dining table. "Ma, please sit. Tea is ready," she said.

Mother went back to the kitchen, but as she returned with a pile of *parathas*, Father walked in. Mother gave a worried look, and asked, "Anything wrong?"

Father smiled, and said, "Nothing is wrong. I've come for the tea." He looked at the table, and said, "Pea *parathas*! Lovely! I'm lucky. When I return late, I miss out on these delicious snacks. Not enough time left before dinner." He then pulled out his purse, and said, "Raju, we must have some pastries as well."

Rajiv rushed out to 'Maxims', the neighbourhood bakery, and Monica ran after him. Father said, "Can't wait," and

helped himself to *parathas* and lots of *aloo*. Brother and sister returned with pineapple pastries and jam tarts, their favourite items.

Ending his meal with two cups of tea, Father said, "This multinational company has asked me to join as Executive Vice-President. I'll be only one step away from the top. The salary will be much more and there will be perks."

Mother smiled, and Grandmother said, "You deserve it. Even after all the office work, you keep on studying."

Rajiv said, "I'll have a new sports bike. Mona can have the old cycle. As it is, she uses it whenever she wants to."

Monica said, "I'll have a synthesiser."

"We'll see," smiled Father. He then said, "Another good thing about this new job is the allowance for children's education. Rajiv will enroll in the best tutorial, and Mona will go to Oak Grove, one of the top public schools."

"But I don't want to go," protested Mona. "I like my school. The teachers take so much care. You remember, my poem was printed in the children's section of the paper. Mrs. Sengupta, the Bengali teacher, taught me how to write poetry while we waited for the school bus."

"In Oak Grove," said Father, "the teachers live in the campus and all their time is for the students. It's not only studies; they have so many activities, riding, mountaineering, to name two."

"My school has a hiking club," said Monica. "Last year, the senior students went rock climbing in Purulia hills."

"Mona can cycle," added Rajiv. "That is more useful than riding."

"Jokes aside," insisted Father, "there is much more to a public school." But he was interrupted by the prolonged ringing of the doorbell. As Rajiv, on the run, opened the door, Mr. De's sister, a frequent visitor, came in.

"*Didi*," said Mother, "just in time, have some tea."

"*Pishimoni*," said Rajiv, "Peas *parathas* and *dum aloo*."

Pishimoni looked at her niece's glum face, and asked, "What is wrong with our Mona?"

"*Baba* wants to send me away to boarding school," said Monica.

"Oh no!" exclaimed *Pishimoni* in a shocked voice. "Not our Mona. As it is, Sourav is away at IIT Kanpur but at least he's much older. Now, I'll have no one to help me with my shopping."

"Mona will enjoy her stay in boarding school," said Mother. "She can have her secret society and her midnight feasts. She reads Enid Blyton all the time and keeps grumbling about home."

"Last week, when *Pishimoni* was here," said Monica, "we had a midnight feast."

"Her father is too easy on her," said Mother. "But sending her to boarding school is a good decision."

"No, not at this age," said Grandmother. "Later, maybe at college level. We're lucky, the children are in good schools. Many guardians are jealous. When I used to pick up Mona, hopeful parents would ask my advice for admission to Shailaja Girls."

"It's a good school," said *Pishimoni*. "Their ex-students are doctors, engineers and one is even a pilot."

"Shailaja Girls is a fairly good school," agreed Father. "Officially it is English medium from class four, yet emphasis remains on the vernacular. The girls do not have a modern outlook. They are not that independent."

"One should not neglect one's own language," said Grandmother.

"True," replied Father. "But these days, the competition is fierce. You remember, I was considered the top technical expert, but was passed over for promotion. The review board rated my spoken English below par. I had to work hard to improve my diction. The children should not have to struggle so hard. Raju is in class nine and cannot move, but Mona must have

the best of schooling. I can afford it."

"My school is good enough," insisted Monica.

"I've been told," said Father, "I may have to move to Bangalore. The R & D centre where the new products are developed is there. What will happen then?"

"I'll stay with *Dadu*," replied Monica. "And *Pishimoni* will be only two houses away."

"You won't," said Father. "You'll be in Oak Grove. Public school is different. Except for the language classes, only English is spoken in the campus. You may stand first in Shailaja Girls, but you won't find it that easy there."

"She won't find it that difficult either," argued *Pishimoni*. "She is such a good student.

"She reads all my books," confirmed Rajiv, "even the science texts."

Everyone knew that for Monica, all subjects, in her own words, were 'easy'. In her class, competition was only for the second place. Father said, "There are advantages to a public school. There is the old boy network, ex-students help each other. I want you to have the best possible education."

"I won't go," cried Monica with tears in her eyes, and ran out of the room.

"She'll understand," said Mother. "Give her time. She'll come round. Our Mona is a good girl."

Back in her room, Monica sat thinking. She loved her school, she was not going to leave it. Father would have to change his mind. Once, challenged by her best friend whether she could float upwards when doing the *padmasan*, Monica had replied, "If you try hard enough, nothing is impossible."

Monica knew Mother would be of no help; she always agreed with Father. She came out of her room in search of her grandmother.

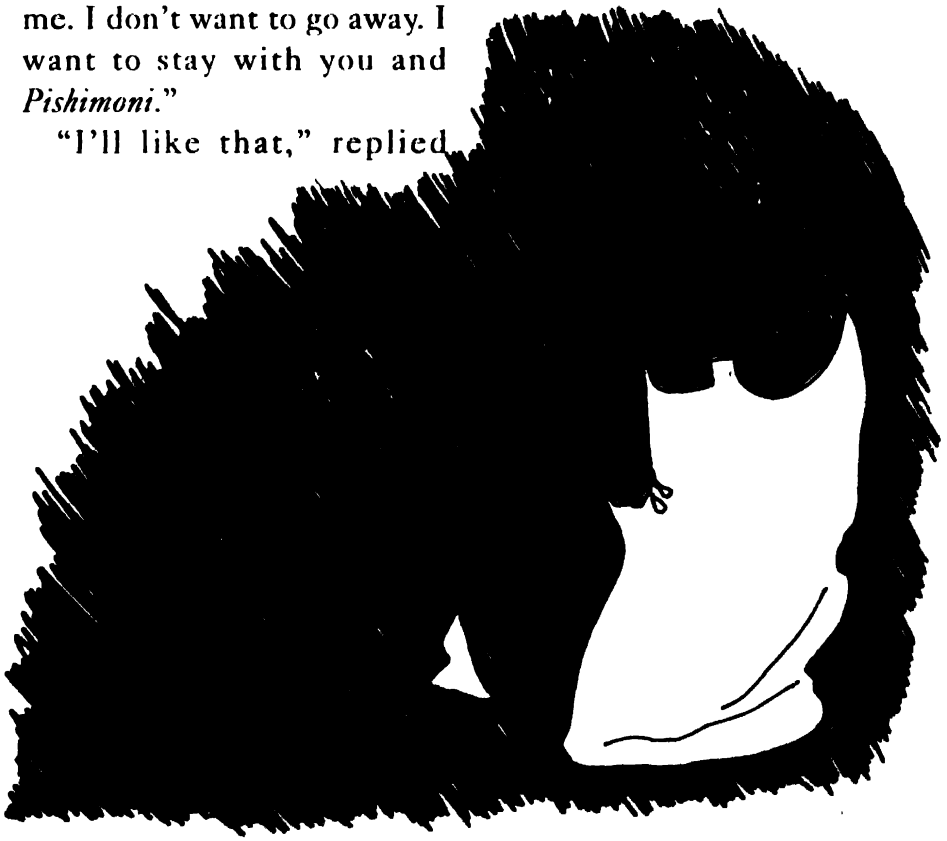
Grandmother was in her room, talking with *Pishimoni*. Monica barged in, and in desperation said, "*Didu*, help me to remain in Shailaja Girls. You know how good the teachers are and how much they help me. I don't want to go away. I want to stay with you and *Pishimoni*."

"I'll like that," replied Grandmother, "though you should be ready to leave home if that becomes necessary. But if I say anything more, your father will become even more obstinate. As it is, he thinks I spoil you."

"*Pishimoni*," said Monica. "You must help *Baba* listens to you."

"Not where your schooling is concerned," replied *Pishimoni*. "After you ran out, I tried again to persuade him to keep you at home but he became angry. Give him time to cool down and meanwhile we'll find some way to make him change his mind."

The days passed but there was no more talk about Oak Grove. Every night, Father checked Monica's homework for the next day and talked



about her activities at school and at play but said nothing about her going away.

Two weeks later, the unexpected happened. After a very good dinner which ended with chocolate ice cream, Father smiled happily and said, "It's all settled. From the next session, you'll be in Oak Grove. I wrote to the Principal and she liked the school reports that I had sent with the letter. She'll meet me next week when she is in town for a conference, but I'm sure the interview will be only a formality. Our Mona is a good girl and any school will be proud to have her."

Monica, very upset, protested, "I won't go. I'll not leave school."

"You will," replied Father in a firm tone. "It'll be for your own good."

"I won't, I won't," screamed Monica. "*Didu*, tell *Baba*, I'm not to change my school. He doesn't understand how good it is."

"Mona," said Grandmother gently, "your father knows best. You have to do what he thinks is right."

Monica burst into tears. She stamped her foot angrily, shouted, "Dictator! You won't try to understand, won't even listen," and ran out of the room.

Father, very annoyed, said, "Why can't our Mona understand? She should come to her senses."

Grandmother said, "Biku, if Mona must go to boarding school, can't you wait till she reaches class nine?"

"No, Ma," replied Father. "The school does not allow new admissions after class seven; only old students are promoted to senior classes."

Mr. De went to the guest house on the appointed day, where Ms Chatterjee, the Principal of Oak Grove School, was staying during her visit to the city. Ms Chatterjee had concluded her major engagements and was in a relaxed mood.

Mr. De wished the Principal and said, "We are all very pleased Monica will be in Oak Grove, the best school in the country."

"Yes," smiled Ms Chatterjee. "All parents want their daughters in Oak Grove but I can take in only a few; I have to be very selective, have to maintain the standard." She then frowned and said, "I have reservations about Shailaja Girls. Their students are overfond of the vernacular, and do not want to accept English as the main language. But Monica has excellent grades and we should be able to manage her."

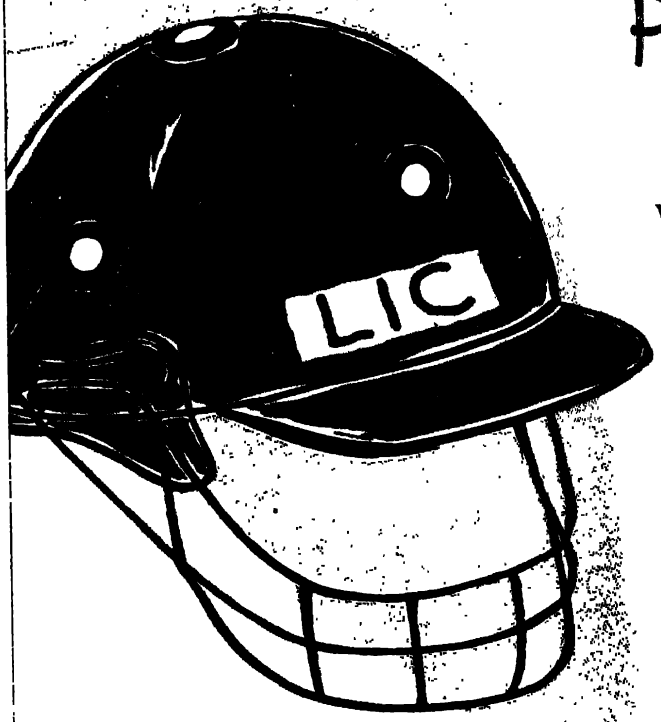
Ms Chatterjee then chatted about Monica's family background. She laughed and said, "Sounds spoilt, over-affectionate aunt, adoring grandmother, the worst influence. Monica will have to adapt to Oak Grove's modern outlook, break out of the shell of traditional backwardness. We'll have to work hard on her."

Mr De was annoyed. His Mona was a good girl. She was not spoilt. She did stand up for her rights but only because he had taught her to do so. And the impertinence that his mother was out of date was too ridiculous. She was a voracious reader, well aware of the latest trends, and had many young friends. Mr. De hid his annoyance, thanked the Principal and left.

That night, after dinner, Father said, "Today, I met the Oak Grove Principal. She's keen to take Mona but I've changed my mind. Public school means too much drill, too little home influence. One should have roots, a sense of belonging, an awareness of one's culture. At the school stage, it's best to study from home and absorb family values. Boarding school is for those who cannot stay with their parents or are not doing well from home. Our Mona will continue in Shailaja Girls and, I'm sure, she'll do very well from there."

Grandmother smiled and said, "Biku, I knew you wouldn't send our Mona away. She is your best friend, and every evening, you must have your little chat with her."

LIC means Protection

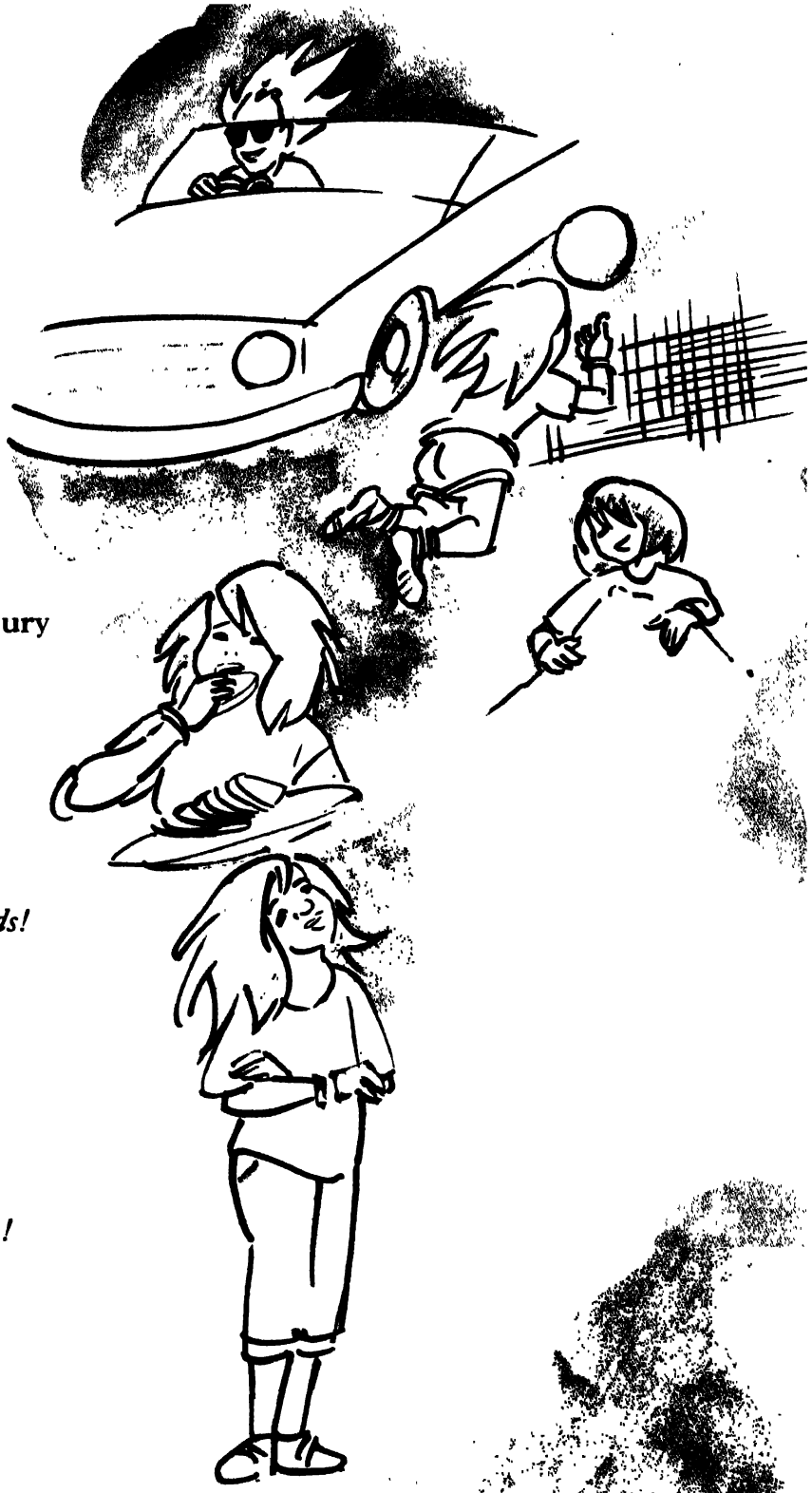


When the big bowler throws a nasty ball at you, your helmet protects only your face.
But LIC, the Life Insurance Corporation, provides you full protection all through your life.
Ask your parents to explain what an LIC Policy is.
And how it keeps you secure and protected.
Because LIC cares for you.

Life Insurance Corporation of India

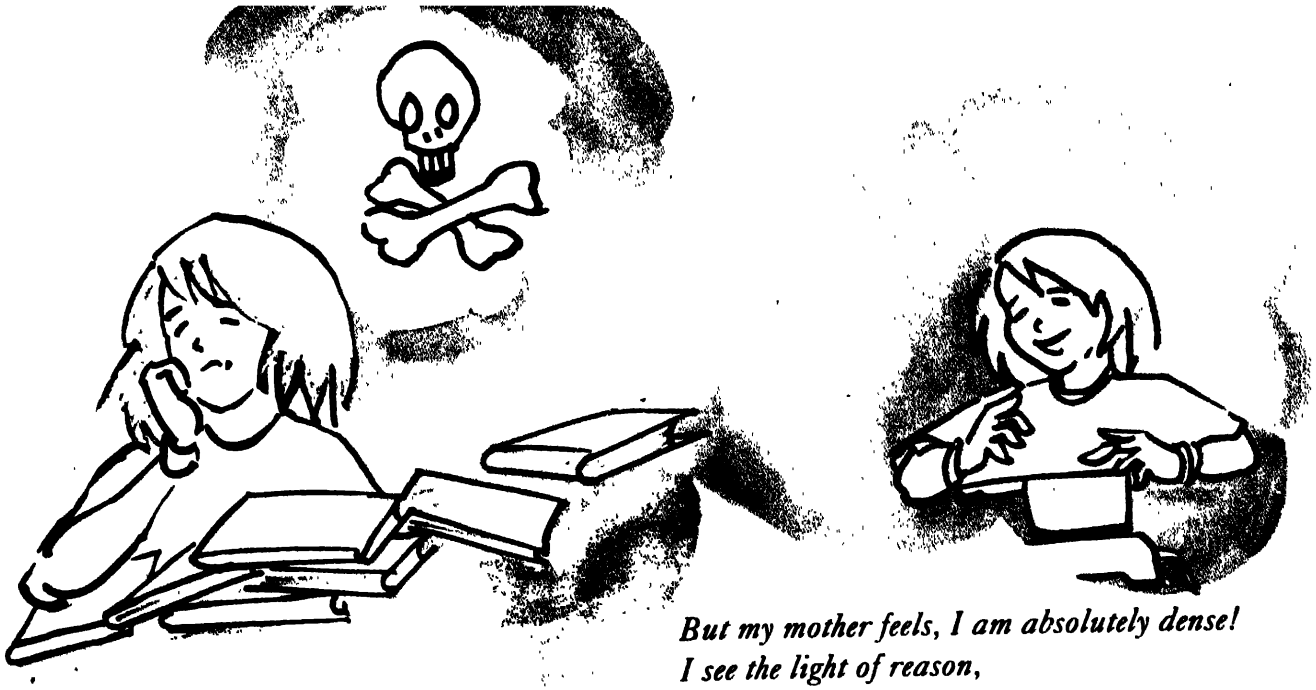
Insure and be Secure

Growing Up

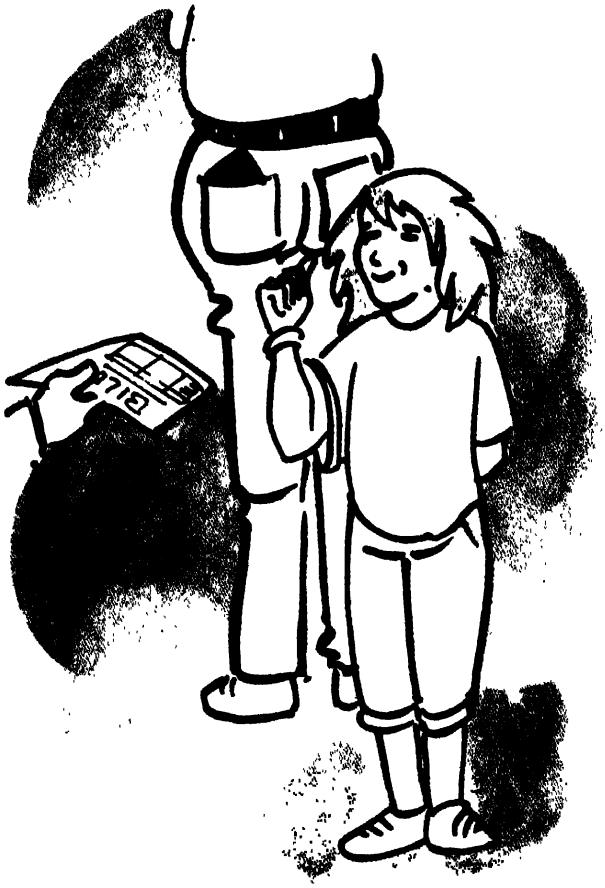


Anjum Dhir (16)
Illustration : Nilabho Dhar Chowdhury

I do have a ticket to ride,
But not one to drive.
I still fight for my marks with my teachers,
But my face does have developed features.
I still haven't grown very tall,
But I have learnt to play volleyball,
As a matter of fact, without hurting my hands!
But I still love playing in the sands.
And also raiding hamburger stands!
I prefer French fries to candy,
But am still not allowed to drink shandy
Is this state of being neither here nor there,
What they call the growing up affair?
Well actually these are just two words,
Confusion, panic, panic and more confusion!
Being in this in-between hanging position,
All I feel I am doing is
Becoming more and more neurotic,
My mind never seems to remain static.
But I guess a mind never can be.
Which reminds me, that I am in
The process of learning,
To be calm, resourceful and responsible.
But all I ever seem to be doing,
Is becoming less and less innocent!
If I drive, I give my car a dent,
I love spraying myself with scent.
My teachers feel I have a lot of sense,



But my mother feels, I am absolutely dense!
I see the light of reason,
But I fail to understand this season,
Is it an empty mind that's a devil's workshop,
Or is it the devil's mind,
Which is an empty workshop?
I love to see Beverly Hills,
But I still can't pay my own bills,
Nor can I run any mills!
My demands Dad still fulfils.
I know how to make tea,
But am still scared to be stung by a bee,
And no longer like to climb trees,
In the world I still have to make my mark,
Though I am no longer afraid to walk into the dark,



Mickey dosen't fascinate me,
But The Extraordinary does!
So I ask you, am I a child or am I an adult?
I guess I am neither,
Just a little beyond childhood,
But, a step behind adulthood,
I am, I guess, still in what
They call 'the growing up stage!'
But at least I am over with my childhood phase!
But tell me,
"What is this life if so full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare?"
But don't let me give you a scare,
Do you have a poem to spare?

A PARADISE FOR BIRDS





Text : Brinda Gill
Transparency :
Satyajit Gill

IT WAS AN early morning, end-December. At the fringes of the Keoladeo National Park the air wielded a sharp edge. After procuring the entry tickets, we drove along the main road cutting through the scrub forest. The sun was just emerging and warmed the cold, fresh air. On either side spontaneous natural vegetation concealed the depth of the Park. It was curiously relaxing after the ordered, formal avenues of the capital city. We had driven down in our car from Delhi but you can get here from Delhi by Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation buses or taxis at fairly reasonable rates. The road leads directly to the barrier, where all motor vehicles are abandoned. It is onward on bicycles or cycle rickshaws. We took the latter—a yellow plated cycle rickshaw, number ninety, and were off. The cycle driver's name was Ram Babu and he was to be our guide as well. We also acquired a field guide book of ornithology, a pair of binoculars and a camera as well.

Trees hemmed the road, which sloped gently into shallow lakes, on either side. Beyond the trees, amidst the water plants floated scores of birds. Just twenty-nine square kilometres, the Park was teeming with life. Cormorants floated low with their necks and the tops of their backs showing; striking darters, revealing only their sinuous necks, narrow heads and pointed bills speared fish. Sharing the waters and squelchy marshes were dabbling ducks (surface feeders who often dive down with their tail ends sticking out of the water) like spotbills, mallards, teal, wigeons, pintails, gadwalls; and dumpy diving ducks like pochards. Gaggles of alert grey lag and barheaded geese edged the waters with the bronze winged and pheasant tailed jacanas—the latter without his pheasant tail in the winter. There were plenty of coots—resident and migrant; moorhens and waterhens. Painted storks clustered together and a solitary blacknecked stork waded in the shallows... so much seen, so effortlessly and there was much more in store.

Our cycle rickshaw driver seemed to discover birds when we did not detect any movement or easily recognize them, telling us their names, habits, status—resident or migratory and seasonal colour changes even from a distance, without binoculars! Carrying a pair of binoculars is highly recommended and in case you do not own one, the driver hires his out for a nominal fee. He patiently conveyed us down the path, stopped when we wished to dismount, walk or pause awhile, near the water bodies. Extremely obliging, specially as photographs were being minutely composed, he offered timely suggestions. And for a particular species we wanted to see he made sure he spotted it for us. During the winter months the Park offered him a source of livelihood as he ferried visitors around sharing with them his knowledge of birds—offering us a memorable foray into nature's bounty.

Winter is a rewarding time to be at Keoladeo with migrants from beyond the borders (apart from local migrants) having arrived here. Severe winters, snow-bound land, restricted daylight hours compel birds to migrate from Central Asia, China, the Middle East, Siberia, Tripoli and other places to the warmth and plenty of Keoladeo, a paradise for them. The birds start arriving as early as mid-August. During migration, birds often utilise thermal currents. On a hot day the warm air rises up in currents. Many birds utilise these rising currents to take them, effortlessly, to great heights, then glide down till the next thermal, climb up again and so on... often for

hundreds of kilometres!

At intervals along the road, raised tracks lined with *babul* (*acacia nilotica*) trees led into the wetland. *Ber*, *kalam*, *khajur*, *khejri* were the other common trees; while the waters mingled with luxurious grasses and reeds. Abundant vegetation provided excellent nesting sites for birds and doubled up as a screen for bird watchers. We walked awhile on a bund, but the breeze from the flanking waters sliced through to the bone. Too cold for comfort we back-tracked to a sun-dappled path. Abruptly the driver whispered, pointing between the trees. Above the waters a pied kingfisher hovered mid-air, his wings flapping rapidly as he scanned the waters, waiting for the right moment, then dived vertically, about ten metres, to strike a fish and fly off. We were thrilled with this piece of good luck and so was the driver. A few paces later he glanced skywards, then at the water. He silently pointed out a stationary coot amidst water plants. A Pallas eagle circled overhead, while the frozen coot, not making a ripple, stared at him. The danger flew past and we all—coot included—breathed again. A bird hunted down, before your eyes, is sad.

The Keoladeo National Park was developed by the Maharaja of Bharatpur, in the 1890s, as a wildfowl hunting preserve. Observing a low lying scrub woodland which become waterlogged during the monsoons, the Maharaja had the water supply from a nearby canal diverted, thus creating a shallow lake. The area was enclosed with embankments, divided by bunds soon enough it attracted sands of birds and shikaris! Today, fortunately, only cameras hunt.

Our guide took us to a spot from where we could see the Siberian crane. The Keoladeo National Park is the only wintering spot, in India, for Siberian cranes. They fly 5,500 kilometres each way, stretching across the Himalayas at 5,000 metres to here around late their numbers cranes were hunting gration.

There was only rian Crane in the dista we watched it through bin lars. There it was. A crane with a red neck f aquatic vegetation, se its natural habitat. A slow timid breeder, only one chick is reared out of two eggs laid. If disturbed, Siberian cranes abandon their nests. One hoped that in the years to follow there would be more of its species descending on Keoladeo.

And while the birds are the



main attraction here, there are small mammals like wild boar, sambar, chital, blackbuck, wild cats and jackals, spotted in different pockets of the Park. This small park sustains a surprisingly large number and variety of bird and animal life, owing to its viable ecosystem as well as because each species being specialist feeders, consuming one ingredient of 'the living soup' as the waters have been called! Siberian cranes feed on aquatic roots and tubers; flamingos sieve the water for plankton; spoonbills check the mud for molluscs, tadpoles and weeds; open bills chase freshwater snails; painted storks, egrets and herons—fish...

Winter at the Park is spectacular with over three lakh migrants having joined the residents. By February, they prepare to leave. Large flocks of migrants gather amidst much discussion. A spectacular take-off with a great rush of wings turns them into fleecy clouds in the sky. The Park is undoubtedly much quieter without them, but soon many of the small terrestrial birds prepare to nest.

During the monsoons the Park takes on a different mood as the lakes teem with a variety of fish—the staple diet of many of the birds. Besides fish, aquatic vegetation, frogs, insects, crustaceans and plankton are in plenty. This has yielded a viable pyramid of life, which has a wide base of vegetation, a smaller quantity of herbivores and a yet smaller number of carnivores. To keep each individual species alive, the entire ecosystem had to be preserved, for there should be no break in the food chain. Small trees and shrubs growing in the water or on the bunds provide ample space for birds to build their nests and breed. Some of the trees are completely adapted to extreme climatic conditions—they grow well at high water levels, as well as in the drought period. The trees resound with the sound of the nesting activities of egrets, herons, cormorants, darters, spoonbills, among others. There are arguments regarding the ownership of nesting sites and building material. Soon the disputes are settled, the nests are ready and the trees woven with nests topped by squawking birds. At times a single tree is meshed with nests belonging to 8 or 9 different species! When the chicks emerge, their healthy appetites keep their parents busy. As the sun gets strong the painted storks spread their wings to shield their little ones. The scene supports Keoladeo's reputation of being one of the finest breeding grounds for water birds.

Much effort had gone into building the Park. Grazing of cattle was banned in 1982 as cattle disturbed the birds and stirred up mud in the waters, which choked the fish. But the absence of cattle has led to an overgrowth of grass over large, open, water bodies, which has made it difficult for birds feeding on tubers. So the grass is manually cleared. The growth of the water hyacinth, which spreads rapidly across the waters, is also continuously checked. The boundary wall of the Park was repaired and completed to discourage cattle. Unfortunately many visitors to the Park treat it like a picnic spot—talking loudly and throwing plastic bags around. Some children even throw stones in the water. By their acts not only do they disturb the residents of the Park—the birds—but they themselves lose out on the joy of seeing a wide range and number of birds in their natural habitat. For, whichever season one visits this beautiful haven for birds in, one realises that it is also heaven for bird watchers.

Answers to
Hey Riddle Diddle!

1. A Mexican frying an egg!
2. Throw them away, of course!
3. I don't know. But if you see one, run for your life!
4. Corn-on-the-cob.
5. Cloud.
6. Shadow.
7. Your name.



Twenty

"TABU, come and meet Latika Aunty," Rina called out to her daughter. Her cousin Latika had just dropped in.

There was no response from the room upstairs where Tabu was. Only the music Tabu had put on.

Smiling at her guest once again, Rina called out once more, "Tabu! Come down! Say 'hello!' to Latika Aunty."

Still no answer. Rina turned to Latika and said a little apologetically, "Do sit. I'll go d get her."

Well, if Tabu is too busy or thing," said Latika, ing offended, "you disturb her."

o, it's nothing like aid Rina nervously, I just..."

With the sentence incomplete, Rina rushed up to Tabu's room. There Tabu was, bent over her homework, but with the cassette-player on.

"Tabu, didn't you hear me calling? Latika Aunty's here. Come and say hello to her."

"I don't want to," replied Tabu, coolly, without even looking up. "I've got a monthly test tomorrow and I don't want to be disturbed."

"What nonsense! You've got your music on—you don't find *that* disturbing but you can't spare a minute for a guest!"

"Music isn't disturbing, Mummy, Latika Aunty is."

"For God's sake, Tabu, softly. Latika will hear," said Rina.

"I don't care," retorted Tabu. "I don't like her and I won't say 'hello' to her."

"You don't say 'hello' only to people you like. Have you forgotten all about courtesy and politeness?"

"Rina!" Latika's voice floated up from the sitting room below. She sounded a little impatient.

"Just a moment, Latika," Rina called out sweetly and loudly.

"Tabu, sweetie-pie, come on, she's downstairs, just say 'hello' and come up again. Don't let her say that I've brought you up badly."

"Oh, all right," said Tabu. She scowled, but got up and stomped down.

"Hello, Latika Aunty," she said in a lifeless tone.

"*Ao beti,*" said Latika and almost pulled Tabu down beside her on the sofa. "How tall she's grown," she remarked to Rina. "But too thin," she said immediately after. "Her arms are just like sticks." She squeezed them.

Directing a nervous glance at Tabu, Rina said, "Tell us about your trip to the South, Latika."

But Latika went on about Tabu. "My, look at your hair, Tabu. You should take better care of it. Why, at your age, your mother had hair twice as long and twice as thick. Why hasn't she inherited your head of hair, Rina?"

Rina squirmed in her seat, and made another effort to change the course of the conversation. After a while, Latika began to talk about herself, and became quite engrossed in doing so. Seizing the chance, Rina sent Tabu up with a, "Tabu, don't forget your home-work."

But that did not save her from a big scene after Latika had left.

"I have told you not to call me down like you did today!" Tabu exclaimed, eyes angry. "Why do you keep on doing it?"

"There are certain obligations you have to abide by," Rina tried to tell her. "Demands of civility. I'm not asking for more."

"Civility? It's hypocrisy," Tabu shouted back. "I am not the least bit happy to see someone, and I have to say I am. It's sheer hypocrisy."

"I don't see what the problem is in just saying 'how nice to see you' to someone, whatever you may be feeling within. Why can't you give a visitor some sort of a welcome?"

"Because I don't feel like it, that's why," snapped Tabu.

"There you go again!" exclaimed Rina, growing angry. "I am tired of telling you that one has to be nice and polite to everyone, whether one feels like it or not. And anyway, why don't you like Latika Aunty, may I know? Just because she says your hair is thin and things like that?"

"Well, yes!" said Tabu. "She's always making some comment like that and making me feel self-conscious."

"And what about Girish Uncle? You hardly sat five minutes with him when he called last week. And the fellow has actually looked after you when you were a baby, and Daddy and I had to go out."

"That was thirteen years ago and I hate to be reminded of that, Mummy, every time he comes. He keeps on about it and so do you."

"Mrs. Das from next door? Old Mr. Chaudhuri, *Dadaji's* friend? What's wrong with them? You make the same fuss when they call."

"Don't go on about it, Mummy," said Tabu, her voice beginning to shake. "You know you aren't always thrilled when people land up. Last time when Latika Aunty came, weren't you cribbing to me about the way she never rang up first? And didn't you say Mrs. Das never praises the sweet-dishes you offer her?"

"Yes, but don't you see? In spite of that, I am always polite to them when they come. That's what I call courtesy."

"And that's what I call hy-



pocrisy!" retorted Tabu, brushing off angry tears. "You grown-ups, what hypocrites you are!"

Rina gave a start. What did this remind her of? Where had she heard these very words said in this very tone?

No, she could not quite remember. And anyway, she felt too tired and dispirited to try. She had a load of provisions to buy, and decided to go out just then. Tabu called out a 'bye', but she did not answer.

Outside, her feet dragged on the pavements and while she did her shopping, her mind was elsewhere, wondering tiredly: What should I do next time Latika or Girish calls?

Her bag felt heavy and she wished she could sit down. She realised she was right in front of her friend Gita's bungalow. 'Good, I'll go in and have a cup of hot tea!' she thought and walked up the gravelled path to the door.

"What a pleasant surprise!" exclaimed Gita, letting her in with a cheerful smile. "Sumi! Come and see who's here."

There was no immediate response. "Just a minute," said Gita and disappeared behind a curtain, calling, "Come, Sumi."

A sudden fear clutched at Rina's heart. What if Sumi was saying just what Tabu had said to her, "I don't want to."

In a panic, she screamed out, "Gita! don't disturb Sumi. She must be busy studying. I don't want to bother her. I really don't."

"Bother me? But, Aunty, I am so thrilled you've come!" said Sumi, pushing aside the curtain and coming in. "I was out in the balcony, Aunty, and so I couldn't hear Mummy at first. I wasn't studying or anything. And even if I were, what's all this about disturbing me?"

Her smile was so warm that Rina felt a lump rising in her throat. "You have become so thin," she quickly said, and almost bit her tongue the next moment.

But Sumi just smiled and said, "Just shedding my puppy fat, Aunty! I am fourteen now!"

"And your hair!" Somehow, the words rushed out of Rina's lips. "Your mother and I had twice as much hair when we were your age."

"I know! I feel so envious," replied Sumi, as sunnily as ever. "Tell me, what can I do about my rat's tails?"

Rina spent a most pleasant hour there, sipping tea and chatting, first to Sumi, and then, when Sumi went after a while, to Gita. She felt welcome, she felt wanted. She also felt a bit sorry for Latika. Perhaps she had come to us as tired and dispirited as I, but she never got what I am getting now. Courtesy matters,

manners do carry meaning. That is what Tabu does not understand—I wish Tabu could be a little more like Sumi, especially when Latika and the others come visiting! She sighed and took her leave, gathering up her shopping. With Sumi's cheery 'bye' ringing in her ears, she went down the little flight of stairs to the gate.

She turned back, realising that she had left one of her packets behind. As she reached the door and made to press the bell, she overheard voices from beyond the door.

"Thanks, Sumi, for being nice and polite to Rina Aunty."

"How could I behave otherwise! With the smack you gave me yesterday when I didn't want to come and say 'hello' to Vikram Uncle."

And instantly, Rina remembered the scene that had earlier flashed across her mind for a second, and then escaped her.

It was a girl in bell-bottoms—the fashion of the late '60s. A skinny girl with unruly hair. Herself, at fourteen. "Oh, you grown-ups!" she was shouting to her own mother.

"Enough of this," Ma was saying angrily.

What had it all been about? Ah yes, *Mausi* had come for an unexpected visit and Ma had asked Rina to keep her company while she finished some of the necessary housework.

Rina had not been at all fond of this aunt and was, just then, deep into a tale of teenage romance borrowed from the local library.

"Sit and chat with *Mausi* as is the duty of a host," Ma had ordered. "I have loads of work to do."

"I don't have the time to spare either; my book's overdue at the library," Rina had said.

"Don't give me that stuff," replied Ma. "Do as I say. I won't have *Mausi* going back and telling everyone what a rude girl you are and how badly we have brought you up."

"I don't care what *Mausi* says about me and I don't see why you should either. As if I don't know how much *Baba* and you dislike her!"

"That's beside the point. She's come to pay us a visit and we must make her feel welcome."

"Even though she's not really so? My, what hypocrites you grown-ups are!"

And Ma had slapped her! Rina's recollection was now crystal clear.

She could not help a wry smile. The same situation, the same person, and how different the reaction had been from that of twenty years ago. She had shouted at her mother for forcing her to be polite to *Mausi* and here she was, expecting the same politeness from her daughter. Ironical!

She turned away, without collecting the packet she had left behind. Her cheeks tingled. With this conversation between Gita and Sumi, she was transported back in time.

It had stood Tina in good stead, that episode with her mother. It had helped her keep relationships intact and develop the reputation of being a good hostess. For, after that, she had never dared to be rude to visitors or guests. Even when the most unwelcome of guests had come at the most inconvenient of hours, she had had a ready smile on her lips.

A forced smile, but a smile, all the same.

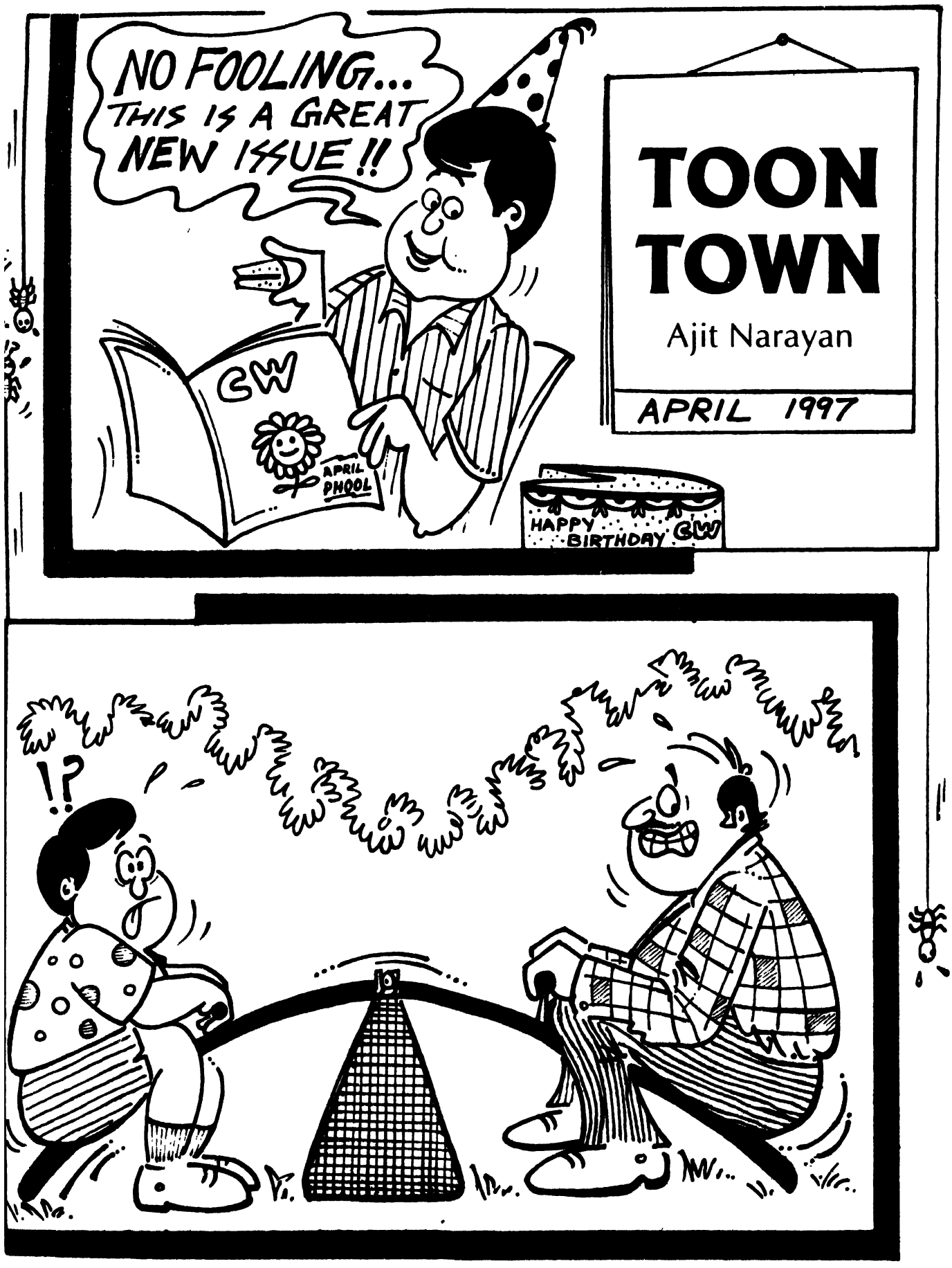
Did a little bit of acting really matter as long as what it kindled was a warm feeling in someone else as Sumi's had done in her?

Was it always wrong to be 'hypocritical'?

And was good sense to be rejected just because it was being 'struck' into you literally?

She would ask Tabu, thought Rina, as she made her way home. Tabu would have an answer. And she almost knew what that answer would be. It had been her own answer, twenty years ago.

Yes, she knew what Tabu's answer would be. But would it be Tabu's answer twenty years from now?


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IT HAPPENED quite suddenly, as, I suppose, these things do. No violence. No gunshots. No killing. No squealing tyres followed by a sickening thud. Just a quiet, noiseless slipping away. It was just like him, in fact. My Dad, I mean. Quiet, noiseless. No fuss, no bother. No attention demanded. Only a little given.

I got home from school to find the door locked. Nothing unusual. Ma worked as a freelance editor for a publishing house. While she was supposed to be back by lunch, her work often kept her in office till late. Which was fine by me. I was, after all, thirteen years old and didn't need to be hanging from her *pallav* all the time. The keys were with the upstairs neighbour and lunch was in the hot case. So, off I went to get the keys from Mrs. Krishnamurthy. She met me on the stairs. She led me down and opened my front door.

"Your Mummy will be back later..."

I nodded and smiled, thinking, 'I know that, thanks—and I can open the door myself, you know.'

She picked up my *thali* from the table and began ladling out my food.

"You go ahead and wash up. I'll serve you."

"It's all right, aunty, not to worry, I can manage."

I mean, what was she up to? She was only supposed to hand over the keys to me, like she did so often, not babysit me, for goodness sake.

"It's no trouble," she in-



sisted, folding my *chappatis* into neat little triangles.

I shrugged and went to my room. 'Hope she's gone by the time I get back to the kitchen,' I thought. But she was right there, seated opposite my waiting lunch. Who knows, maybe she was lonely and felt like chatting. She was a sweet old lady, really. Living on her own. Living really from one letter to another. Letters from Canada, the US and Australia, where her two sons and a daughter who were married had settled. The letters weren't too frequent, but they were the highlight of her life.

"How was school?" she asked.

"Um—okay—I guess..." I answered noncommittally.

That's me, Mr. Noncommittal himself. The No Comment King.

"What are your favourite subjects?"

"Er—all of them...sort of."

Hey! Mrs. K. was O.K., but I didn't feel like getting into a detailed discussion about my likes and dislikes with her.

"Is the food hot enough? Shall I heat it?"

"No, no—it's fine, thanks..."

I'd really rather be plonked in front of the T.V. Channel surfing is one of the best ways of unwinding after a gritty school day.

But instead, we sat there, making this scintillating conversation, and me gulping my food down to get it all over with.

It was while I was washing my *thali* and glass that she came quietly up behind me and put her hands on my shoulders. "*Beta*, th-there's something I have to tell you..."

I don't remember the exact sequence of events after that. Or the exact words either. It's a sort of blur. Somehow, Mrs. Krishnamurthy and I were speeding along to a hospital. Then I saw my Mom. So tiny and so wan. Her lips and eyes were so pale, they had sort of blended in with her skin. So she appeared completely featureless. Featureless and old. Hardly my Mom at all. She saw me and came towards me. I had a sudden urge to run away. She was so frightening, so strange.

"Oh, Aftab," she whimpered into my shirt.

Gosh, I hadn't realised how much taller I was than her. The top of her head was tucked under my chin. In fact, I hadn't measured my height recently. I'd be maybe 5'5" or so by now. How many years more did I have to grow? Would I hit the magic 6?

But then, I didn't have time to think about my height anymore. For Ma was clutching my hand so hard and I was standing next to this hospital bed. All white and sterile. This thing lay there and Ma and Mrs. Krishnamurthy were sobbing—almost wailing. I was looking at them stupidly. Wondering what I should be doing.

At the funeral, I kept hoping that the flying ash wouldn't dirty my nice white *kurta*. That *ghee* and *samagri* made a kind of nice smell when they burned. And I wished that people would stop staring at me. Hey, I'm not the one who's dead here. And worst, worst of all, I felt like laughing. This uncontrollable bubble of mirth kept coming up my oesophagus. And I kept forcing it back down.

And all the while, I didn't cry. I didn't even feel like. In fact, I consoled everyone who hugged and kissed me and patted my head and told me to be brave. I didn't feel particularly brave, or even the need to be so. All I knew was that I couldn't bear to see Ma going to pieces the way she was. But there were enough people to look after her. In fact, it seemed that I didn't have to do a thing. Everything was being done by somebody else. I was given tea, things to eat, told to sit here, stand there, do this or that. And I followed, zombie-like. Quite happy not to have to take decisions I wasn't used to taking.

Then there was another flurry of activity. From the corner of my eye I could see my father's things being smug-



gled away. It was like they were being stolen. It was as if my father's name had become a dirty word—never to be spoken out loud again. His things never to be seen. Ever again.

And all the while, I did not cry. Not a tear. Nor did I protest about his things being taken away like that. In fact, I didn't even know how Dad had died, until I overheard some relatives whispering 'heart attack' under their breaths. I was in a daze of stupidity—happy, almost, that I wouldn't have to go to school, that I'd be able to miss my Sanskrit test.

Then things quietened down. The relatives began to leave, hugging my still weeping mother and patting my back, telling me to look after Ma. And to be brave. Brave—ha! I didn't feel brave, only stupid. Stupid and wooden—doing things like a wind-up toy. But I nodded and promised I'd be a good, responsible and brave boy. Promising to become one of those geeks I'd always hated.

Alone now, Ma and I wandered around the house like two empty shells. We didn't speak much, or eat much or do anything much. Once I spilled my milk all over myself and we both laughed like crazy. Which was fun. But then, Ma started to cry again. Which wasn't. I just got a mop and cleaned up the mess and went

to change wondering if it was ever going to be all right to laugh again. But I still didn't cry. Not a drop.

After a couple of zombie weeks, Ma and I sort of decided that it was time to get on with our lives. Rather, she decided. I was kind of enjoying myself, seeing visions of dropping out of school and taking on an Amitabh Bachchan-like job as a railway coolie or something.

But Ma said that she wanted to get back to office and I had to get back to school. She still looked awfully pale and wan—as though, along with all those tears she had also cried out her soul. Or something like that. I don't know. I'm not a great philosopher type. I didn't say anything, just watched her go through the motions.



So, packed and ready, I stood at the bus stop. And then I was confronted with the awful truth. Suppose people in school knew that my Dad had died? Suppose they stared at me? Suppose they came up and said that they were sorry? (Sorry! As though it were their fault.) Suppose they pitied me?

Panic prickled at the back of my neck and washed over me like an icy wave. I want to go home. I'll just not go. I simply won't go to school. Ma won't even know. But then the bus arrived. How could I run away now? So I just hopped on. Trying, struggling to keep my business-as-usual face on. Inside, though, the throat constricting panic sort of grew and wrapped itself around my innards like an intestinal boa constrictor. I smiled at the usual guys, plonked down in my usual seat. Said 'hi' to Govind in the usual way. But nothing, nothing was usual... nothing was the same. Or ever would be. Again.

Gosh! Dad, why did you have to do this? Everything was going along so smoothly. Now nothing was ever going to be smooth or easy again.

"Hi," said Govind. I felt the boa rise and grow again. What was I going to say to this guy who was sitting right next to me. He used to be my best friend. But now I felt that I didn't know him—or rather, that he didn't know me at all. Everything had changed. I had changed.

"How're you?" Govind asked.

"O.K." my voice rose, as though I'd asked a question. Thankfully we just sat silently

after that.

No one said anything. They all avoided eye-contact with me. Or, perhaps, I avoided meeting their gaze. Did they know? Had there been an announcement in class, "I'm sorry to inform you that Aftab's father...we must be very kind to him..." or had there been whispering, "Hey, did ya hear about Afti's dad...?' or, were they all blissfully unaware that my whole life had been turned upside down? I thought of little else and didn't concentrate on anything at all.

As we were leaving Maths class, filing out of the classroom past the teacher's desk, Miss Tandon said, "Aftab" and I stopped. She waited till everyone else had left. I knew what was coming, of course, but I didn't know what I was going to do.



"How are you?" she asked gently.

A standard non-committal reply.

"And your mother?"

Ditto.

Silence.

"There are a lot of responsibilities on your young shoulders."

Shrug of young shoulders.

"If you ever need to talk to someone, share your thoughts... I'm always here, remember that."

Nod. Lump rising in throat. Old boa constrictor waking up. "I hope you know that you can depend on me?"

Please let me go! Let me go! I begged. But outside, I was quite placid.

"Yes, ma'am, thank you," I struggled out of my boa constricted throat.

Interview over. March out slowly. Left, right. Left, right. Walk slowly. Let the panic subside. Slowly. Everything's a blur. Everything's so far away. Distant—blissfully distant. Like Dad.

But now I'll skip on a bit. To when I'd got a hold of myself a bit. To where I was able to study, to talk, to behave like a normal human being. But I didn't feel like one. Inside I was still cold and dead. Like Dad. And I still hadn't cried. Not at all. Ma still cried. Not wailing, like before. Often not even in front of me. But I

would know that she had been crying from the red rims around her eyes and the extra pale look she had afterwards.

We were to have our maths exam. Not that I was really prepared, or anything. But exams never wait till you are. The question paper had just been distributed. I stared at it as if it were in Greek or Swahili, my preparation coming unstuck.

Then, out of the corner of my eye, I saw someone enter the classroom. She whispered something to Miss Tandon. She paled. And she left the room. We were alone. Someone started to giggle. Someone else whispered. And pretty soon, there was a free for all with everyone cheating like mad. Looking into each other's papers, looking into their textbooks and notebooks. I started to feel a bit sick. I felt that I would throw up all over the paper. I didn't look into anything or at anyone. I just didn't know what to do.

Then someone came from the office. They said that Miss Tandon had had to go away suddenly. They said that they were trying to arrange for someone to come to invigilate, but could we behave till then?

Oh, we behaved, all right. Like lunatics. Like wild men gone berserk. In a flurry of paper, giggles and smirks, the guys cheated like mad. I sat there. Terrified. Frozen. I didn't know what to do.

When she came back three weeks later, Miss Tandon looked almost as pale and wan as my mother. She looked tired too.

"I want to explain about that day," she said. "My m-mother fell ill quite suddenly..." A hint of tears in her voice and I knew exactly what she would say next, "I'm afraid, she passed away soon after..."

An uncomfortable silence filled the room. Bunny Sharma, the monitor, stood up and said, "Please accept our condolences. On behalf of the whole class."

She nodded, smiled, made a huge effort to get herself together again. Then she smiled, shook her head and said cheerfully, as though nothing had happened, "I have some good news, too. I'm happy to say that almost the whole class has done very well in the Maths paper. That really did cheer me up during a trying period. Congratulations, and thank you!"

No one moved, no one spoke. I waited. Surely someone would own up and tell her that it wasn't a good result at all. That they had all cheated. But this deadly silence hung over the classroom. There was no owning up. I looked at the teacher, she looked at me. Her look clearly told me that I was one of those who hadn't done well, but that she understood. "Could the class representatives help to pass the papers, please?"

Bunny Sharma stood up. He's going to own up, I thought. He walked up to the teacher's desk. He took the papers. He started to pass them to the other reps. I couldn't believe this. I couldn't believe what a class load of cowards this was.

Hey, I'm not a goody-goody kind. I'm not one of those noble, holy geeks, but man, her Mom had died. Surely we couldn't take advantage of that! Surely we had to own up. It wasn't fair. It wasn't fair at all. I felt sick. I felt that I was about to throw up all over the place. I felt I would burst. I felt that I had to do something...

"Ma'am..."

"Yes, Aftab?"

"Ma'am, the-there's something..."

"Yes, what is it?"

"I think someone should, I think they should..."

The words stuck in my throat. The boa constrictor which had lain quietly for so long was raging in my gut. I felt the world spin and fall apart. Nobody moved to say anything. The boa constrictor was ripping me apart. It was travelling up my throat. It was choking me...

"They cheated!" I screamed out loud. "Every

one of them cheated," I whispered.

And then, like a long overdue dam bursting, they came. Floods of them. Uncontrollable. Unstoppable. The tears, which never came when my father died, poured out now—for what? For a teacher's mother or for a bunch of guys who only did what any other bunch of guys would have done? Or what? But I didn't think about any of this now. I just wept. Stupidly, like a baby. Like my Mom had, so long ago.

I don't really know what exactly happened then. Did they own up? Did they deny? Did Miss Tandon do something? Say something? Nothing else seemed to matter. Suddenly my grief was so overwhelming that I couldn't think of anything else. Suddenly, my loss, my pain was too much to bear.

I sank back into my chair and put my head down on the desk and cried my heart out. sobbed. I cried. I cried till started to feel the old boa constrictor ebbing out of my system. I sobbed till I was exhausted. Drained. Finished.

When I looked up, I was alone. They had all gone. Then I heard a rustle, and she was standing behind me. She pulled up her chair and sat beside me. She didn't say a word. She didn't need to. She understood. She knew. That was enough.



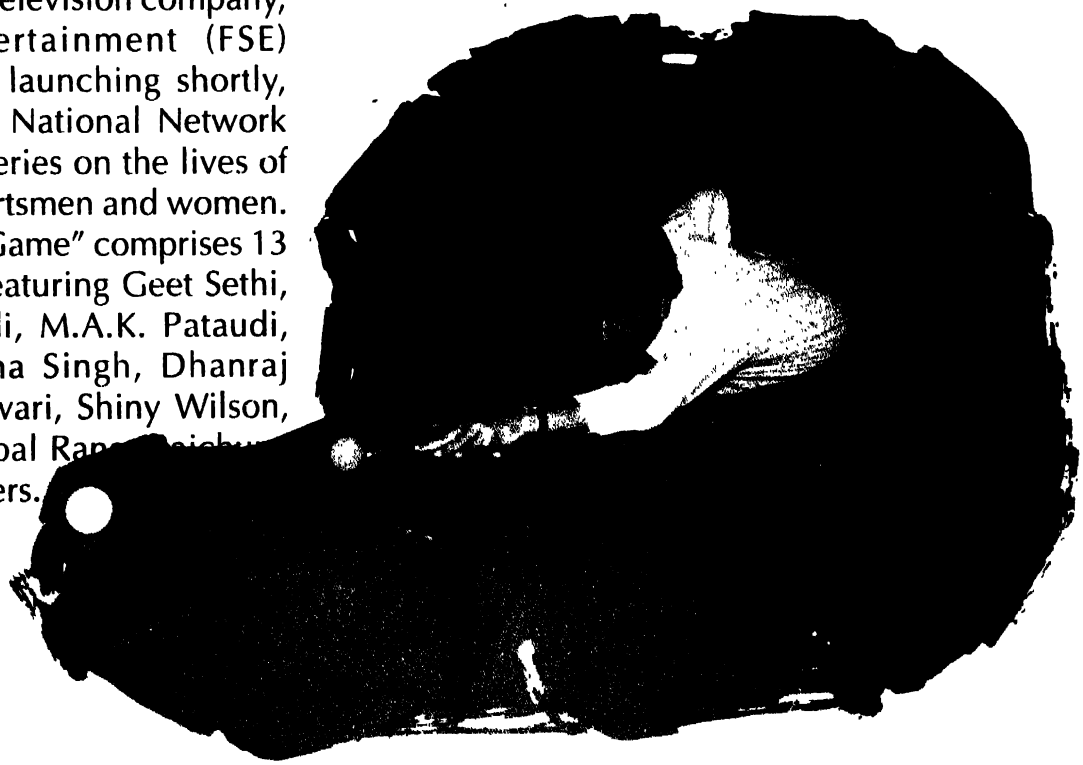
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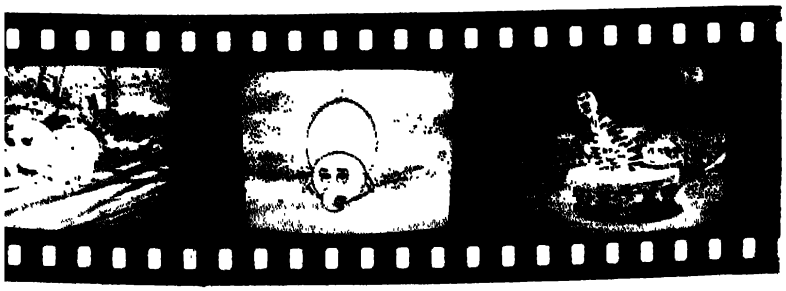
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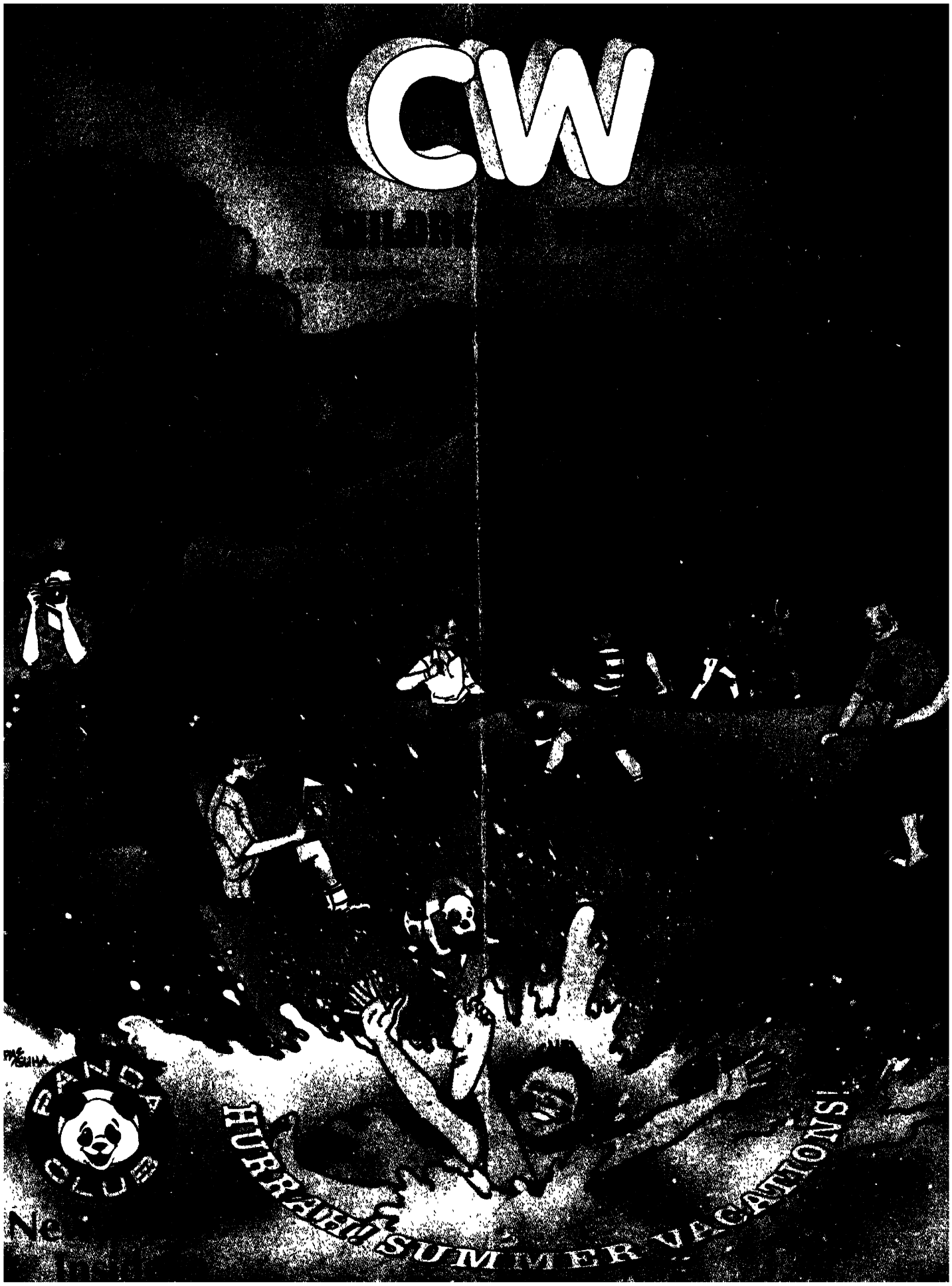


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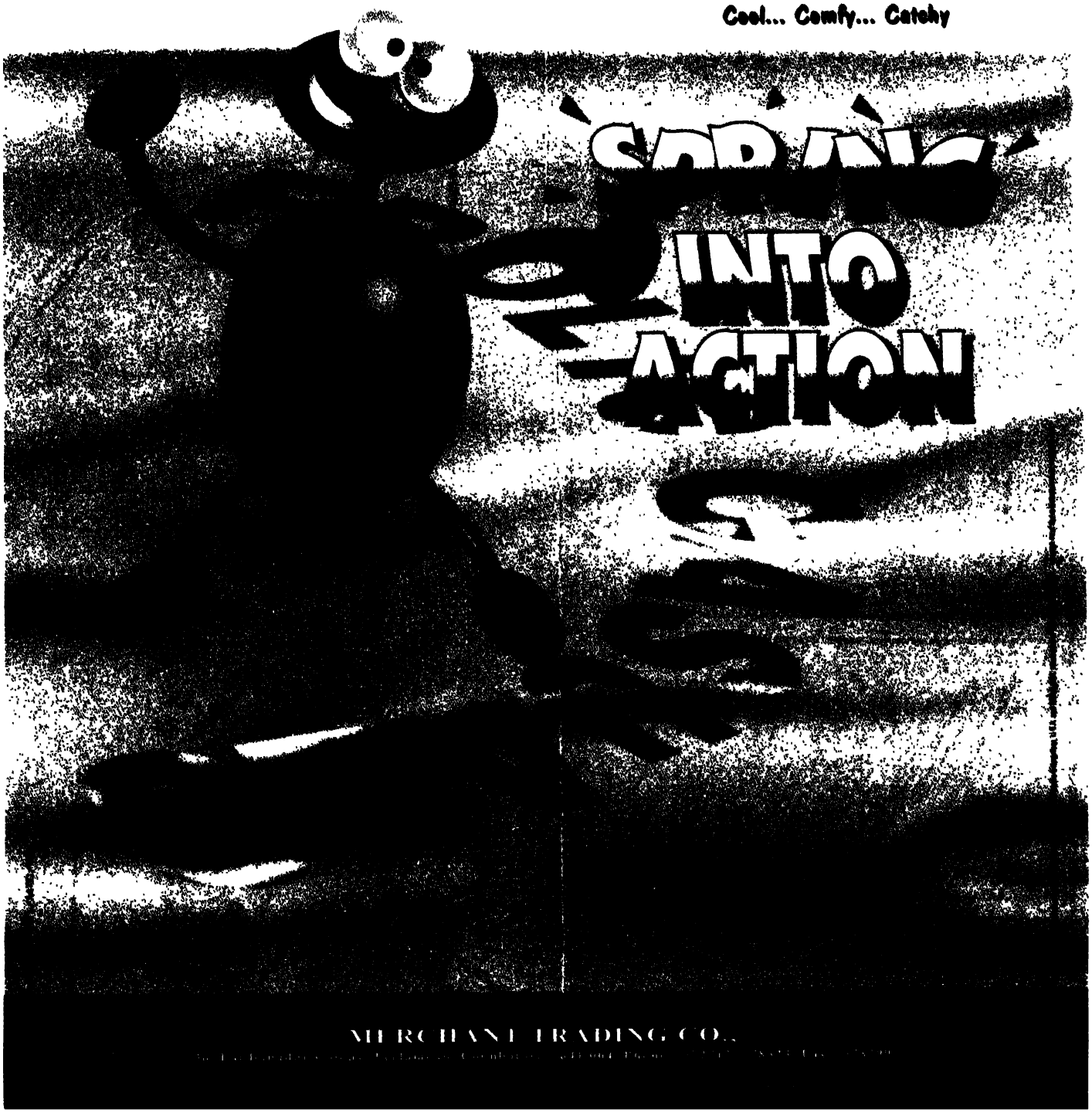

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Dear Readers,

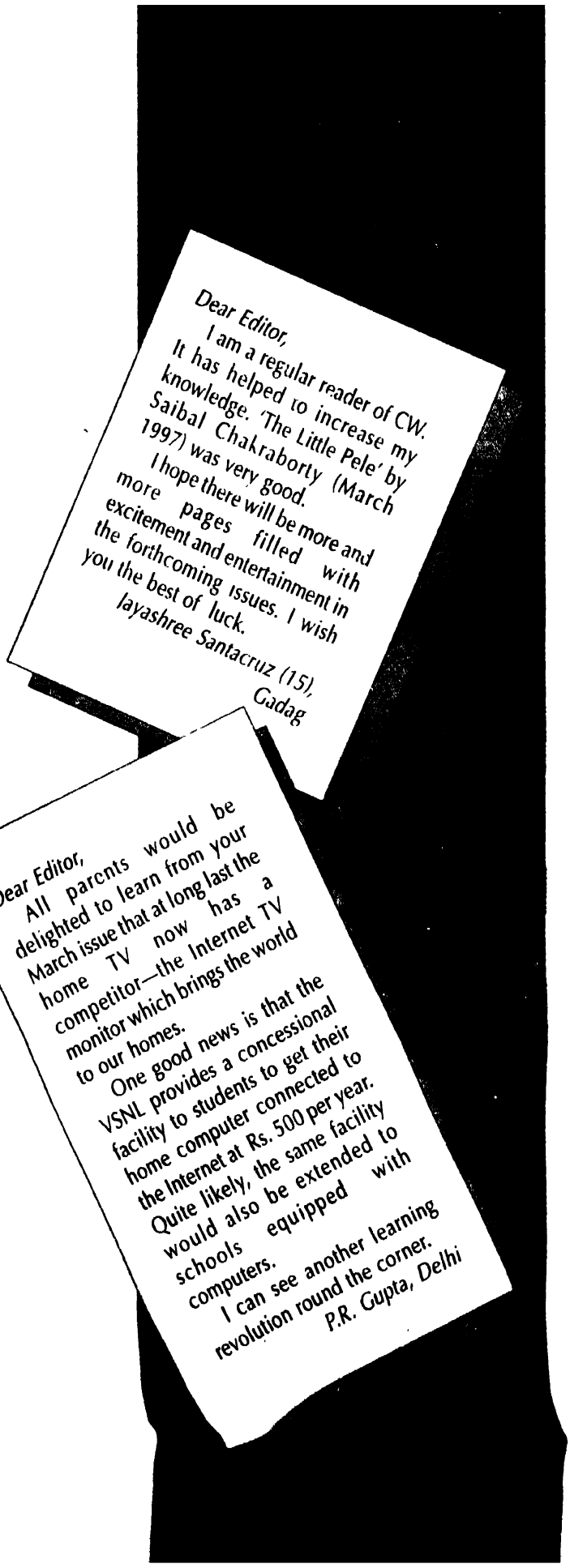
"Have fun in the holidays," says everybody to everybody else on the last day of school. It's tradition. Part of the tradition is to ignore the facts. Like holiday home work. Power cuts. Oppressive May heat.

Part of the tradition is to have fun in spite of all that. Fun is: swimming—so what if the water is warm? Fun is: "mooning" or "swooning" over a summer sunset! Fun is: watching flower-laden branches of the Laburnum (*amaltas*) tree cascading to the ground. Fun is: lots of ice cubes in cola or water. Fun is: eating water melons and cantaloupes. Fun is: Internet. Fun is: channel surfing cut short by "load-shedding". Fun is: music without visuals; thank God for battery-operated walkmans.

Fun is: running errands and "being good" to everybody, because everybody expects you to be lazy and disobedient. Fun is: reading every book is sight because everybody thinks today's children are couch potatoes and "do not read".

Fun is: CW. Need we say more?

Happy May-ing and fun time reading
Editor



Dear Editor,
I am a regular reader of CW. It has helped to increase my knowledge. 'The Little Pele' by Saibal Chakraborty (March 1997) was very good.
I hope there will be more and more pages filled with excitement and entertainment in the forthcoming issues. I wish you the best of luck.
Jayashree Santacruz (15), Gadag

Dear Editor,
All parents would be delighted to learn from your March issue that at long last the home TV now has a competitor—the Internet TV monitor which brings the world to our homes.
One good news is that the VSNL provides a concessional facility to students to get their home computer connected to the Internet at Rs. 500 per year. Quite likely, the same facility would also be extended to schools equipped with computers.
I can see another learning revolution round the corner.
P.R. Gupta, Delhi

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VANDANA /493 CKB



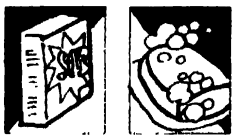
Dear soapsuds and lather,

The problem with Raghu is that he thinks he knows everything. Not just that—he also thinks other people know nothing. The other day he came into my room to teach me to write! Can you imagine—teaching ME to write? I was very cold and polite. I said, "Raghu, you could teach a crow to caw or a blackboard to sneeze but you can't tell me anything about writing that I don't already know."

He started saying all kinds of things but I sat on my bed with my pillow on my head and over my ears. A pillow is very good for cutting off sounds, did you know that? My pillow can even muffle Raghu's screeching, lecturing voice.

Anyway, after that Raghu did not come to my room for two whole days. Blessed, blessed days. I did a lot of work, drew a lot of coastlines, re-read my mystery books, I even began a dictionary—I have wanted to do that for a long time. My own dictionary, with my own words. Anyway I did all this and felt quite happy. You can't imagine how peaceful life is without Raghu around. It's a little empty but never mind that. I suppose peace is a doughnut with a hole in the middle.

PERKY'S



A letter to you

Anyway (that's three anyways already), there I was, quite happy, if a little empty, humming a tune and doing this and doing that when my mother called me.

"Perky," she said. "You are looking very unhappy. I think you should make up with Raghu."

Unhappy? Me? Never.

"But I can hear you whimpering in your room and walking up and down. Clearly you are unhappy."

That's not whimpering. That was humming a tune. And I was not walking up and down, I was doing a lot of work.

"Well, if that is humming," my mother said, "then you have no ear for music. You could say the pressure cooker sings when it makes all those noises."

Of course, the pressure cooker sings. Quite a nice, jolly tune when you think of it and...

"Never mind all that," my mother said. "Just go to Raghu's house, say sorry and make up. Please."

Say sorry? Never. I hadn't done anything at all.



Anyway (that's four of them), I didn't see why I needed to make up with Raghu. He was not all that much of a friend and anyway (five) he was always lecturing me and...

"Just go, Perky," my mother said.

There seemed to be nobody in Raghu's house. I kept ringing the bell and nobody answered. I was about to go back home and tell my mother that Raghu had been carried away by extra terrestrial creatures and Raghu's mother had gone to the market when I heard voices at the back of the house. Burglars, I thought. But then I heard Raghu's screeching, lecturing voice. So I walked round the house to the back.

And there I saw an astonishing sight. Raghu was standing near the water tap at the back and lecturing Kali, the washerwoman, on how to wash clothes. Kali had her hands full of white lather and her face was angry. Raghu was standing like a great man, one hand on the washing stone and his feet crossed at the ankles and saying, "So you see, you must rub the soap straight down like this where there is dirt. And then you must..."

Kali got up and shook her lathered hands at Raghu. "If you know so much...!" she said, "if you know so much, you wash the clothes. Come on. Wash the clothes. Wash that dirty pair of socks. Those are your socks. Come on, wash them. Let me see how you do it. No, don't try and run away



now. No, nobody is calling you."

Then I saw the astounding sight of Raghu actually picking up a soapy pair of grey socks (once white) and picking up the soap and rubbing it on the socks. "Rub hard," said Kali, "all the dirt must go. Come on."

So Raghu rubbed harder. The grey of the socks remained grey. "Come on, rub more soap," Kali said. "I want to see those socks becoming white."

Raghu rubbed more and more soap on the socks. The soap lathered more and more white. Raghu was covered with soap lather, on his shirt, on his knees, on his hands and arms, of course. One big bubble gathered on the top of his head. "Come on, come on," Kali kept saying, "you know so well how to wash clothes. Let me see. Show me."

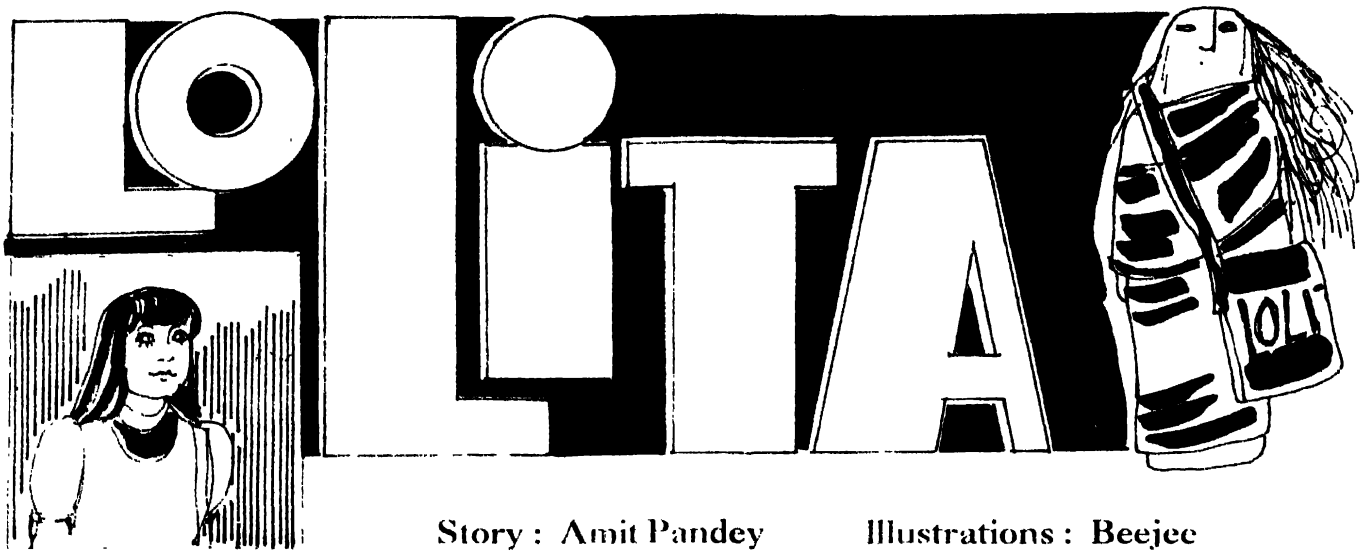
I tiptoed around the house and ran back home.

"Well," my mother said. "Have you become friends again?"

"Oh, yes," I replied. "We've become friends. But Raghu doesn't know it yet. I'll tell him some time later."

My mother looked mystified. I went to my room and began singing. It was a nice song that made sounds like the pressure cooker and the washing soap put together. But it was loud, real singing.

Yours hurray in lather
Perky



Story : Amit Pandey **Illustrations : Beejee**

JAYANTHI, a young, bubbly ten-year-old girl, lived with her parents in a small coastal town of Kerala. Her father was a fisherman who used to go out into the open sea everyday, in his little boat, to catch fish and thus provide for his family. Although a man of meagre means, he took very good care of his only child, Jayanthi, and sent her to a good school. Jayanthi, a bright-eyed, always-smiling girl, was a very loving and caring child herself, and a real favourite with all her teachers and fellow students. Some of her friends came from very well-off families, but Jayanthi being such a good natured girl, they could never think of making her feel low due to her poor living standards.

While coming back from school, Jayanthi and a few of her friends used to cross the town hall market. All the kids used to be fascinated by the goodies displayed in the shop windows and used to spend a lot of time looking at them. Jayanthi's favorite shop for window shopping was the toy store at a corner. The shop windows used to be full of bright, colourful, amazing toys. The jumping monkey, the singing hippo, toy trains, block games and a lot more...but most of all, the dolls. Gorgeous, beautifully adorned dolls which Jayanthi could have given anything to possess.

Many a time she talked about those dolls to her



mother. Jayanthi used to praise the dolls for hours together as her mother listened to her, smiling, while preparing their dinner. She could understand Jayanthi's infatuation for those beautiful dolls. She could feel how much Jayanthi wanted to possess one, but she also knew that they could not afford it. So whenever Jayanthi, after praising the dolls at length, used to actually ask for one, her mother's only reply used to be: "Yes, my dear. By God's grace, if your father lands a big catch, you can have a doll for your birthday."

One day, while coming back from school, Jayanthi paused in front of the toy shop as usual. After looking at all the other toys, her eyes habitually turned towards the doll section. And there, at the centre of the display, was what seemed to be the most beautiful doll in the world. The doll seemed to have come out of a fairy tale. She was fair, with rosy cheeks, and wore a beautiful deep green frilled dress. Her lovely dark hair fell down low on her shoulders. Over a smart shoulder bag the doll was carrying, was printed in bright golden letters — Lolita. Jayanthi stood there spellbound. From that moment, if there was anything she wanted most, it was Lolita, the doll of her dreams.



Suddenly she felt someone tugging at her shoulder and calling out her name. "Jayanthi!" It was her friend, Pallavi, "don't you want to go home?" Jayanthi came back to earth to see all her friends standing around her with obviously worried faces. "What's wrong, Jayanthi?" asked Shanta. "Are you not well?"

"No, I'm fine," said Jayanthi. "My father had promised to buy me a doll for my birthday next month, and now I am sure he will buy me Lolita."

All her friends looked at each other, puzzled. They knew that Jayanthi's parents could never afford to buy a doll as expensive as Lolita. But Jayanthi had said it with such innocence and pride, that they just could not bring themselves to shatter her dream.

"Of course, he will," said Janaki, "and then all of us will come over to your house to play with it."

Saying this all the friends said 'bye to each other, and went home.

When Jayanthi reached home, she could hardly contain her excitement. Even as her mother gave her food, she started praising Lolita, describing her to the last detail. Her mother listened on, silent and smiling as usual. But as Jayanthi came to the part of mentioning to her friends about her father buying Lolita for her as a birthday present, her mother suddenly looked up with a shocked expression.

Jayanthi's beaming face clouded with apprehension. "Did I do anything wrong, Ma? Won't I be getting Lolita?" she asked. "But I have told all my friends."

Jayanthi's mother could hardly say anything as she got up, patted Jayanthi's cheek and went out to mend the fishing nets.

Later that night, when Jayanthi had gone off to sleep, her mother told her father all about Lolita and Jayanthi's hopes of getting it on her birthday. "But this doll must be very expensive," he said. "How can we ever afford it?"

"We also can't afford to dash Jayanthi's hopes," said her mother. "The child has told all her friends about this, and we won't like her to feel deprived or inferior to someone."

"You are right," said Jayanthi's father. "Tomorrow, after I am back from the sea, I will go over to the shop and find out the doll's price. You give me any savings you have; maybe Jayanthi will get Lolita."

Next day, Jayanthi's father went to the toy shop to inquire about Lolita's price. Even he was wonderstruck by the beauty of the doll, but when he heard what it cost, his heart missed a beat or two. Lolita cost much, much beyond the poor man's means. He came back home, a dejected man, and told everything to Jayanthi's mother.

The poor couple felt so helpless. This was the first time their daughter had wished so strongly to possess something, and in her innocence had even spread the word about it. Jayanthi's parents did not want to shatter her dreams, but in their situation, there was very little they could do about tit.

On the other hand, Jayanthi, completely oblivious about what her parents were going through, was happily counting days for her birthday. So sure was she of getting Lolita, that by now there wasn't a single student in her class who didn't know about it. Everyday while coming back from school, she used to check in the shop window to see whether Lolita was still there, or her father had bought it for her. As the days approached for her birthday, her excitement grew, and so did the worry of her parents.

Then one day, just a week before her birthday, when Jayanthi reached the toy shop, Lolita was gone. "I told you," she exclaimed ecstatically to her friends. "Father must have come to the market and bought Lolita for me." All her

friends were surprised, though deep in their hearts they had serious doubts regarding this being true.

When Jayanthi reached home that day, she looked around everywhere. In the attic, in her mother's trunk, even under the fish baskets, but she could not find Lolita. Never mind, she thought, maybe they have hidden it in a clever place to surprise me on my birthday.

Now the days became difficult to pass. Jayanthi just could not wait for the day when she would proudly take Lolita to school, and show it to her friends.

In her excitement she noticed, but never really bothered as to why her father and mother stayed up so late at night, busy doing something under the nearby coconut tree in the moonlight.

At last the day came. Jayanthi got up early on her birthday, bathed and went to the temple with her mother. Her father came back early from the sea, even before it was time to leave for school. Jayanthi could not understand why they hadn't given her Lolita yet. Just as she picked up her school bag, her father and mother came over to her. They bent down to kiss her on the forehead, and then her mother handed her a small paper packet tied with a jute



string. This was it, thought Jayanthi. "Oh, father, mother, thank you so much. I knew you have got Lolita for me. I am so happy," said Jayanthi as she hugged her parents and proceeded to hurriedly unwrap her precious belonging. She undid the string, tore away the paper, and then just stood there, shocked.

She stood, holding in her hand a piece of wood, roughly chiselled to look like a human figure. The piece of wood wore a shabby green dress, had a clump of rough hair pasted at the back of its head, and a cloth bag was slung over what was supposed to be its shoulder. Jayanthi felt utterly betrayed. She wanted to throw the clumsy piece of wood on the ground. It was no Lolita. There was no comparison. She felt like crying for being let down so badly.

But just as she was about to throw it away, the piece of wood started telling a story. She could suddenly see how many hours of dedicated labour and love had gone into shaping that piece of wood into a figure. After a back-breaking day of work, that's what her mother and father had been up to, late at night. She recognised the green coloured dress as having come from a piece of her mother's best sari. She felt the clump of hair, and realised it was her mother's own. So much love, care and selfless sacrifice had gone into the making of that doll, that no doll in the toy shop could match the worth of what she held in her hand. And now, when the tears came, they were not of anger but of pure, honest joy.

As she looked up at her parents, they were not surprised to see her face streaming with tears. They were expecting this to happen. "Don't cry, my darling," said her father as he picked her up in his arms.

"We are sorry for not being able to buy Lolita for you, dear," said her mother, crying herself.

"I will do my best to earn enough money to buy you a pretty doll soon," said her father as a tear rolled down his cheek too.

"No, father, no, mother," said Jayanthi, wiping off their tears. "This is the best doll I can ever find in the whole world. The prettiest one anyone has ever possessed. It shows how much you love me. So silly of me to have gone crazy over those stupid dolls which can't even say a word about how much you love me, or cherish my happiness. This is my Lolita," said Jayanthi in a firm voice, her little face beaming. "But there is just one thing missing..."

And as her parents watched with pride over their little girl's shoulder, Jayanthi took out her pen, and on the cloth bag slung over the doll's shoulder, wrote in a clear, bold hand... LOLITA.

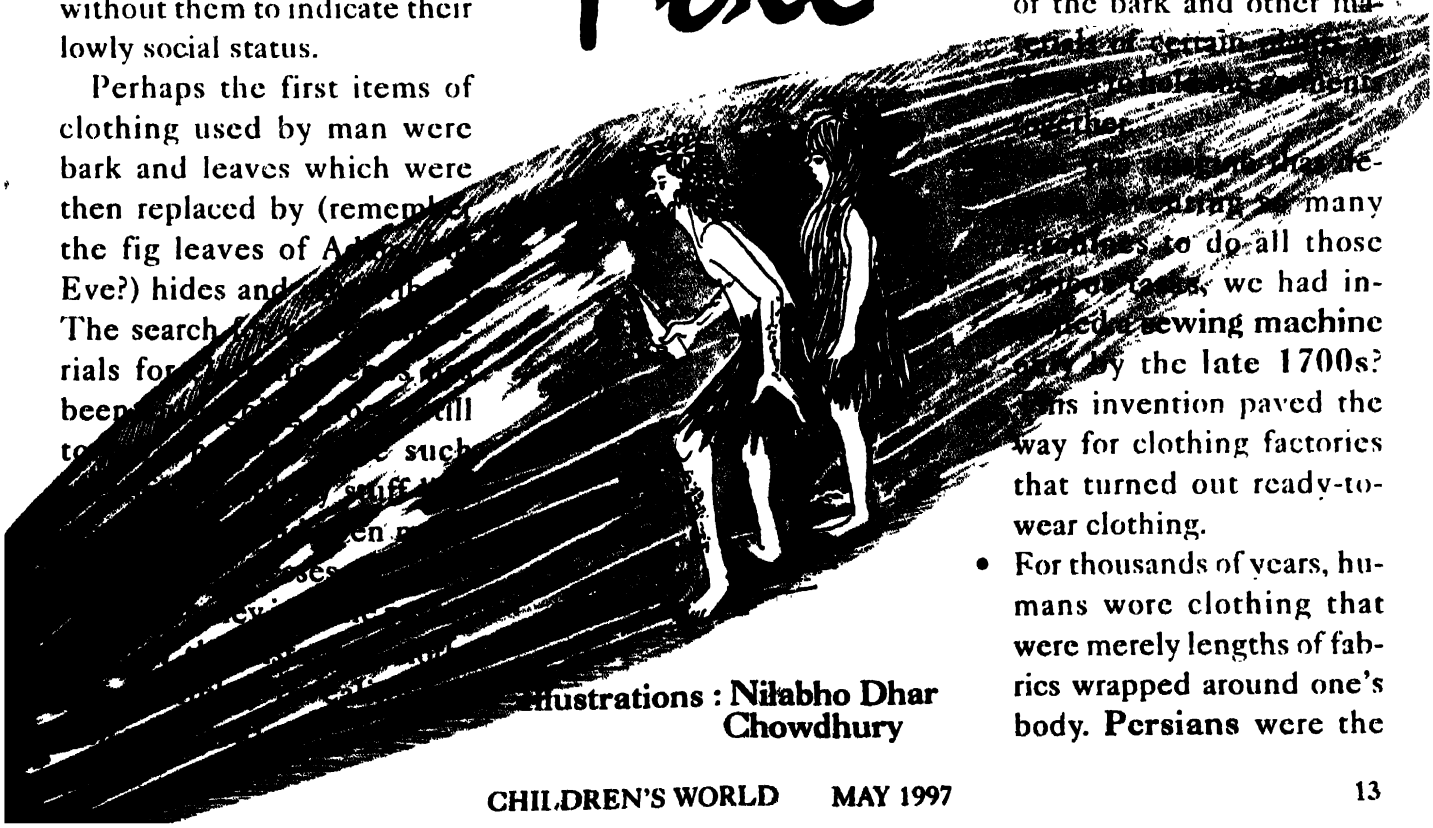


SMALLEST
LARGEST
TALLEST

From Fig Leaves to Foil

WE CALL them the basic needs—food, clothing and shelter. While man learnt to hunt for the first and instinctively sought the last to escape from Nature's fury, he perhaps found the need for clothing, the last. As historical records attest, clothing has been more a symbol of status and style. The accessories used by people down the ages only reinforces this notion. For instance, jewellery served this purpose. In ancient Egypt only the wealthy wore clothes. Slaves and children went without them to indicate their lowly social status.

Perhaps the first items of clothing used by man were bark and leaves which were then replaced by (remem[illegible] the fig leaves of A[illegible] Eve?) hides and [illegible]. The search [illegible] rials for [illegible] been [illegible] still to [illegible] such [illegible] stuff [illegible] en [illegible]



Illustrations : Nilabho Dhar Chowdhury

Go ahead and file these facts:

- Humans are believed to have started wearing clothes **100,000** years ago. Perhaps the bravest among the early men wanted the others to know that the skin he wore came from the bear he had killed himself and thereby proved his bravery.
- Though clothing had begun to be worn that long ago, they were perhaps just wrapped round one for nearly 75,000 years, because it was just **25,000 years ago that needles** were invented and which enabled animal skin to be sewn to make proper dresses. If the needle is there, can thread be far behind? So some innovative human discovered the use of the bark and other [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] many [illegible] to do all those [illegible], we had in[illegible] **sewing machine** by the late **1700s**? [illegible]ns invention paved the way for clothing factories that turned out ready-to-wear clothing.
- For thousands of years, humans wore clothing that were merely lengths of fabrics wrapped around one's body. **Persians** were the

first to cut and fit them into proper clothing. Historians believe that this was necessitated because ancient Persians were horsemen and hunters and the flowing garments being worn earlier interfered with these activities. The modern trousers have their origin in these garments.

James Hargreaves invented the spinning jenny that allowed several threads to be spun at the same time, in 1774. The spinning mule invented by Samuel Crompton in 1779 was even better, spinning as much thread as 200 men doing the same job by hand.

The first steam powered loom was invented in the mid-1780s by Edmund Cartwright.

Though the sewing machine was only invented in the 18th century, the knitting machine had been invented as early as the 16th century. In 1589, an English elergyman William Lee, invented a machine that turned out fully fashioned stockings

Talking of stockings, ancient Greeks wore stockings inside their shoes for warmth. These were made of cloth.

The denim fabric used for the popular jeans, actually originated in France in a place called Nimes, about 300 A.D. It was called Serge de Nimes, and woven in twill weave pattern, giving it the name. However it was only in the late 19th century that American Levi Strauss popularised it in the form of rugged jeans.

- The first woven woollen textiles evidently were made as early as about 600 B.C. somewhere around what is now Turkey. The Egyptians were the first to weave flax about 5000 B.C. Some of the linen wrapped around the mummies around 2500 B.C. are found to be as good as those woven today.
- The first synthetic material was developed in 1884 by a Frenchman called Hilaire Chardonnet. The fibre was called rayon and was first commercially produced in the USA in 1910, where it was called artificial silk. The ubiquitous nylon was developed in the 1930s by H. Carothers.
- Among the countries producing clothing, USA ranks first.



Beauty with Cruelty

What is a little pain in the cause of fashion? Down the ages, people have undergone severe discomfort and even pain to appear fashionable. Ancient Chinese women went for tiny feet, to achieve which they bound the feet of their girl babies tightly to prevent them from growing large and unfeminine. In Africa, men of certain tribes file their teeth into pointed shapes. Tattooing, of course is a statement of fashion today, indulged in by both men and women. Some tribal women in north-east India, wear bamboo rings round their necks to elongate them (as long necks are supposed to be beautiful), and have large bamboo nose rings pierced onto their noses. These ornaments are not removed for years together and then only, to change them.

Compiled by
Thangamani

OPEN MIND

Text: Sonali Shankar
Illustrations: Subir Roy

FEAR

FEAR can be a poisonous emotion. It can torment us, rob us of sleep, and preoccupy our thinking. People can be literally scared to death. Fear can also be contagious. More often, fear is an adaptive response. Fear prepares our bodies to flee danger. Fear of real or imagined enemies binds people together as families, tribes or nations. Fear of injury protects us from harm. Fear of punishment or retaliation constrains us from harming one another.

The brain is involved in the perception and evaulation of situations and events that give rise to emotions. It controls the physiological expression of emotions. A number of structures in the brain are directly involved in coordinating the activity patterns of the stronger emotions, especially fear, anger and pleasure. The Hypothalamus, the Limbic system, and the Cerebral Cortex are parts of the brain that are responsible for the aroused states that are part of many emotions.

People can be afraid of almost anything. But have you ever wondered why we have so many fears? Fear can be learnt. In experiments conducted by psychologists, it has been seen that fear can be conditioned in an individual easily. A famous experiment to test this possibility was conducted on an 11-month-old infant called Albert. "Little Albert", like most young infants, feared loud noises, but not white rats. So psychologists presented him with a white rat and, as he reached to touch it, they struck a hammer against a steel bar just behind his head, making a loud noise. After several repetitions of seeing a rat and then hearing the frightening noise, Albert burst into tears at the mere sight of the rat. Later he was also shown a white rabbit, a white dog, and a white fur coat, followed by a loud noise and in each case, his reaction was that of fear.

To cite another experiment. A dog is given food, and at the same moment, he is given an electric shock. Repeated a number of times, this will eventually result in the dog running away from the food. This is because the dog makes a connection between the food and the shock, and he fears receiving a shock every time he sees the food.

Thus we see that dogs learn to fear neutral stimuli associated with shock and infants come to fear objects associated with frightening noises. Through such conditioning, the short list of naturally painful and frightening events multiplies into a long list of human

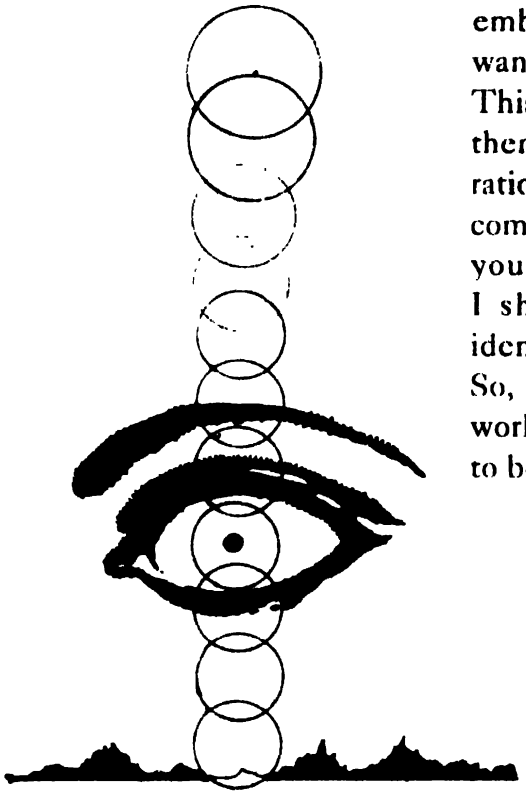
fears—fear of driving or flying, fear of mice or cockroaches, fear of closed or open spaces and many others.

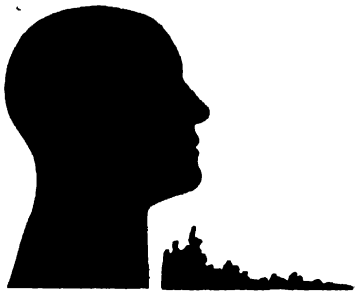
Sometimes we learn to fear something by merely noticing that others fear the same thing. A young child, on observing that his mother is scared of lizards, develops a similar fear.

Since we are discussing fear, we must look into phobias too. Many normal, well-adjusted people have phobias. A **phobia** is a very intense, persistent, irrational fear of some specific object or situaton that presents little or no actual danger to a person. The fear experienced by a person having a phobia is an exaggerated fear, which is very strong and tends to interfere with everyday activities. Most phobic individuals usually admit that they have no real reason to fear a particular object or situation, but they say they cannot help themselves, and they cannot explain this irrational, anxiety-filled fear.

Phobias can be mild and infrequent or they can be so powerful and irrational that they can alter the person's life in a major way. In a phobia, a person tries to control anxiety by avoiding the object, situation or activity he fears.

Many of you might have fears and phobias which your family and friends may know about. Some of you may be embarrassed about them and want to keep them to yourself. This will not help you get over them. Remember, these are irrational fears and you *can* overcome them. Write to me about your fears and phobias and I shall help you out. Your identity shall not be disclosed. So, chin up and smile. The world is not such a bad place to be in!

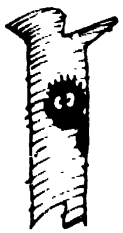




SOME COMMON PHOBIAS



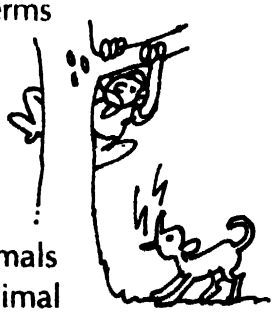


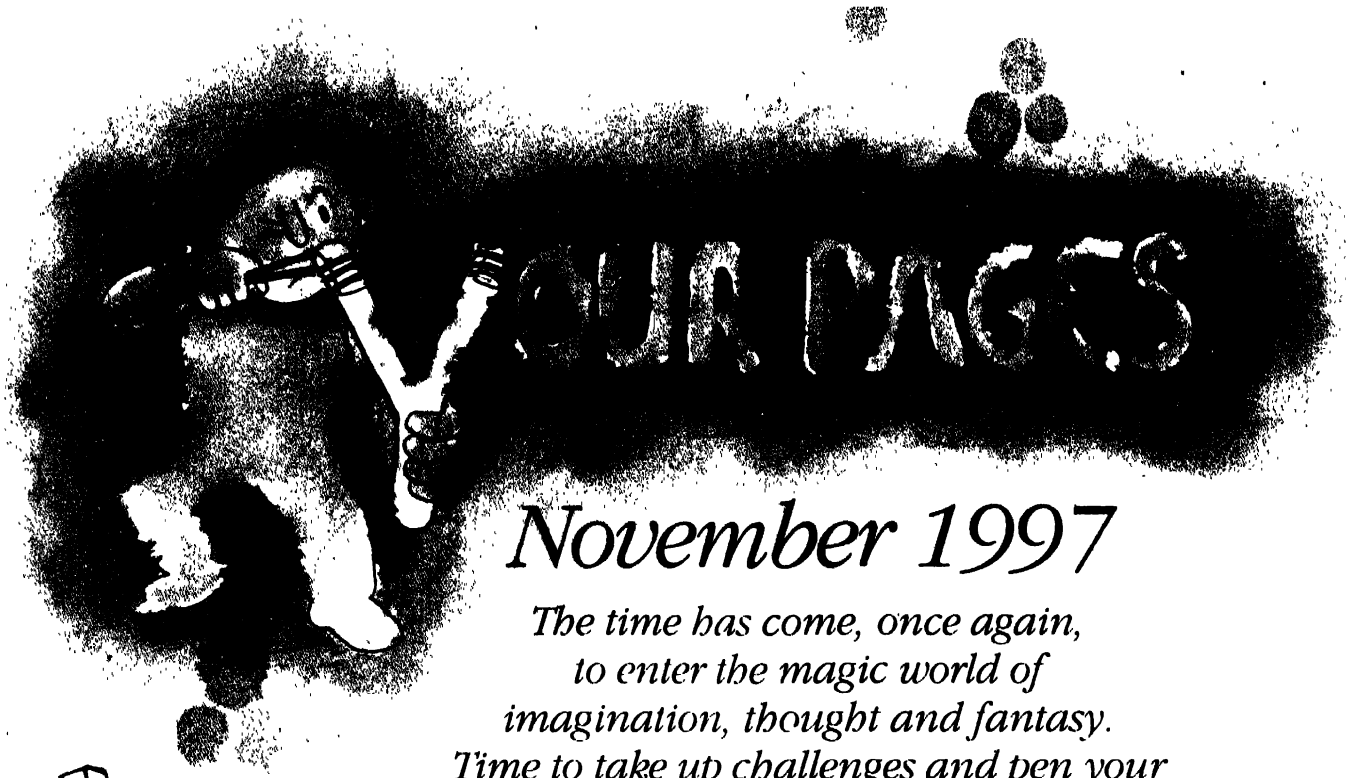


Acrophobia: Fear of high places
Aerophobia: Fear of flying
Algophobia: Fear of pain
Astraphobia: Fear of storms, thunder and lightning
Claustrophobia: Fear of closed places
Hematophobia: Fear of blood
Monophobia: Fear of being alone
Mysophobia: Fear of germs or contamination
Nyctophobia: Fear of darkness
Ochlophobia: Fear of crowds
Zoophobia: Fear of animals or some particular animal









November 1997

The time has come, once again,
to enter the magic world of
imagination, thought and fantasy.
Time to take up challenges and pen your
contributions for 'Your Pages', CW's November issue.
Be it stories, poems, jokes, riddles or interviews,
the November issue is your own creation.
So send us your secrets, outpourings, fears
and aspirations in your words, your style.
Be among the privileged few to see your name
in our Roll of Honour,
and win attractive prizes too.

First prize: Rs. 500

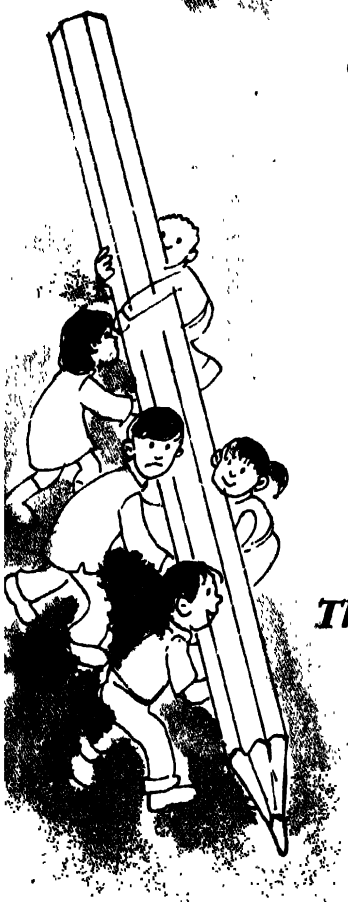
Second prize: Rs. 300

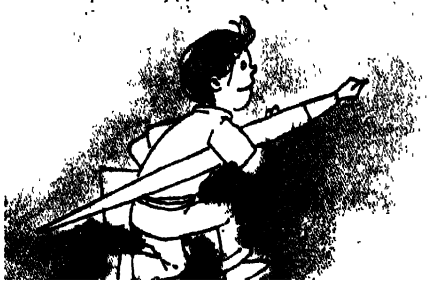
Third prize: Rs. 200

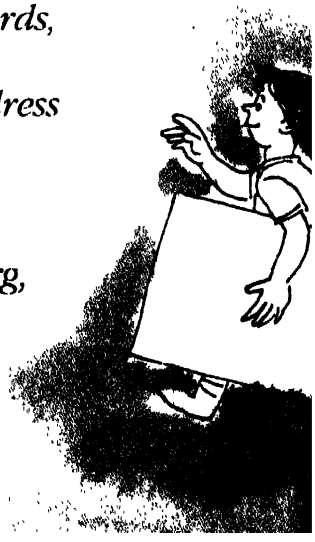
Three 'Highly Commended' prizes of Rs. 100 each

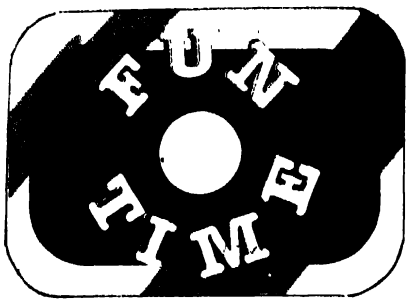
Remember to mark your entries with the words,
'FOR YOUR PAGES ONLY'.
Each entry must carry your name, age, address
and the name of your school.
Send your entries to
Editor, CW,
Nehru House, 4 Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg,
New Delhi 110 002 Fax: 3721090

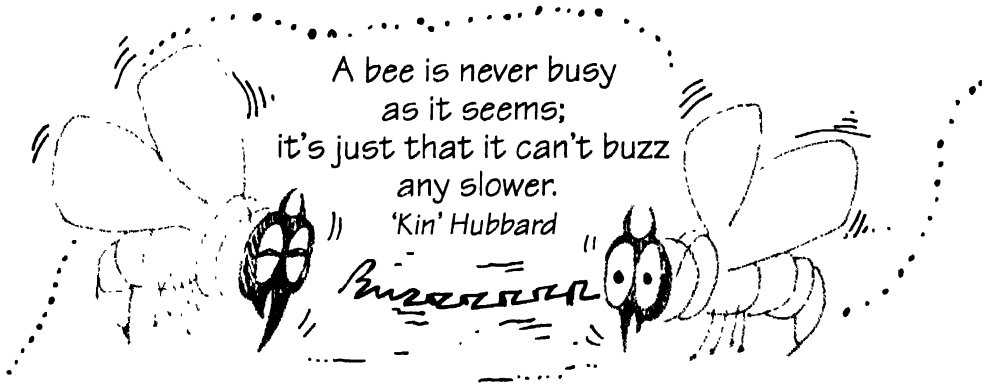
Last date: July 31,1997

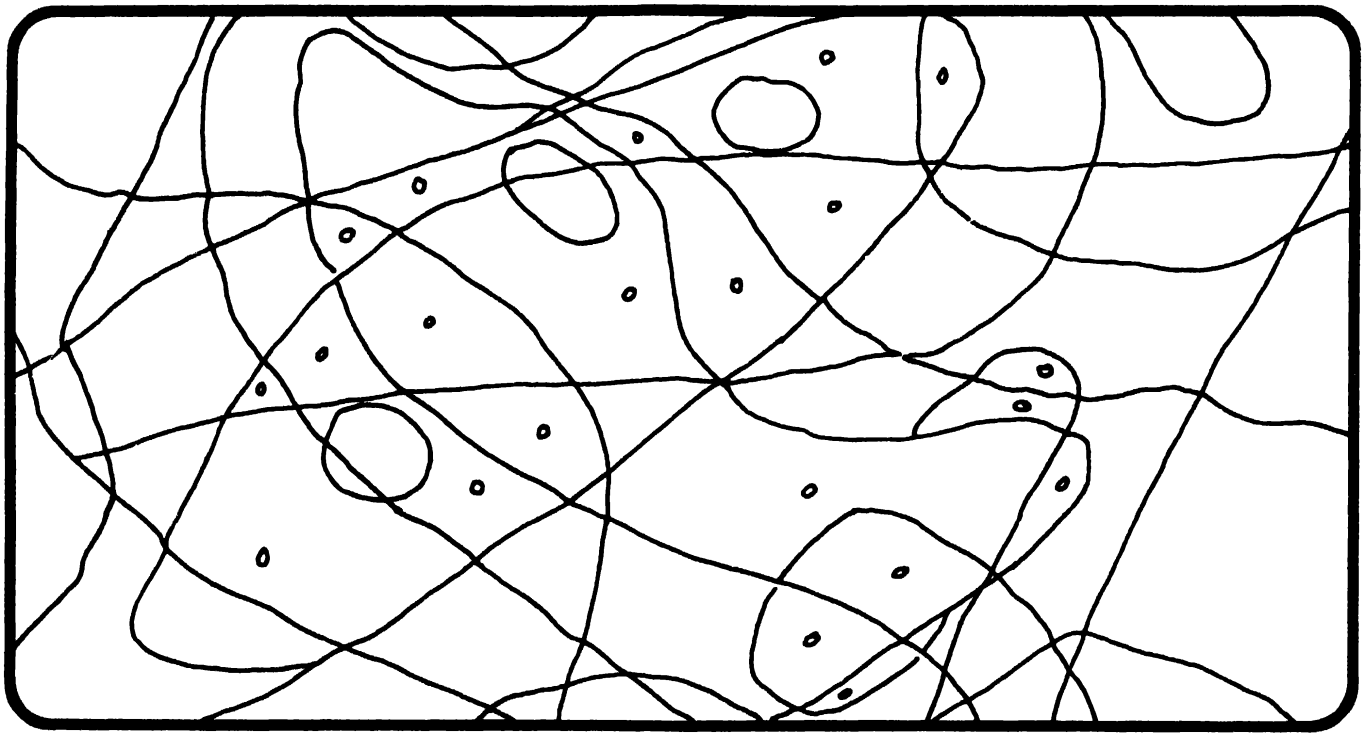












Sun and Shade

Fill in the sections with dots and discover a hidden picture.

Change a Letter

Change the word given at the top to the word at the bottom by changing only one letter at a time.

F	A	R	M
F	I	R	M
F	I	R	E
T	I	R	E
T	I	L	E

S	L	A	M
P	A	I	D

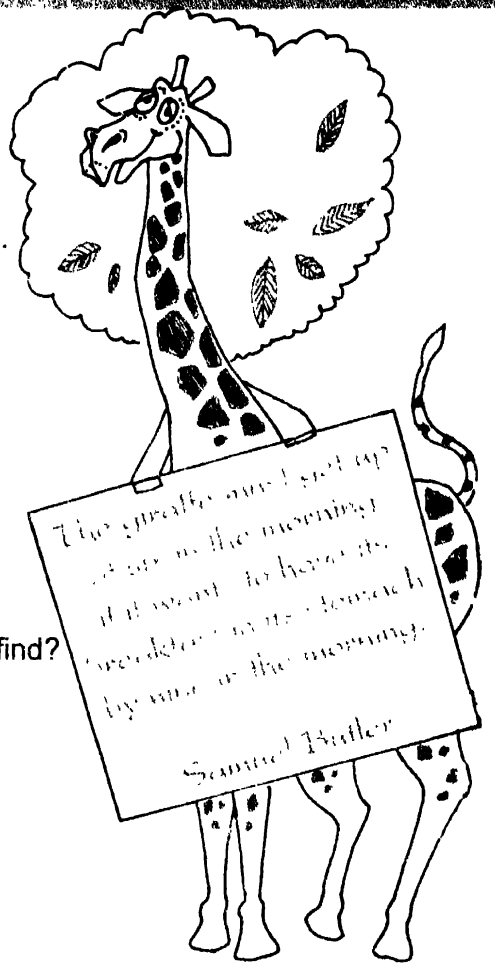
F	E	E	L
R	E	A	R

D	U	C	K
L	A	M	E

Word Within a Word

Listed below are words that contain within them a synonym each. For example, *devilish* carries the synonym *evil.* Can you find the others? The number of letters is given alongside.

1 Instructor (5)
2 Amicable (7)
3 Nourished (8)
4 Boundaries (6)
5 Destruction (4)
6 Feasts (4)
7 Falsities (4)
8 Assured (4)



HI!

Defined here are words beginning with 'HI'. How many can you find?

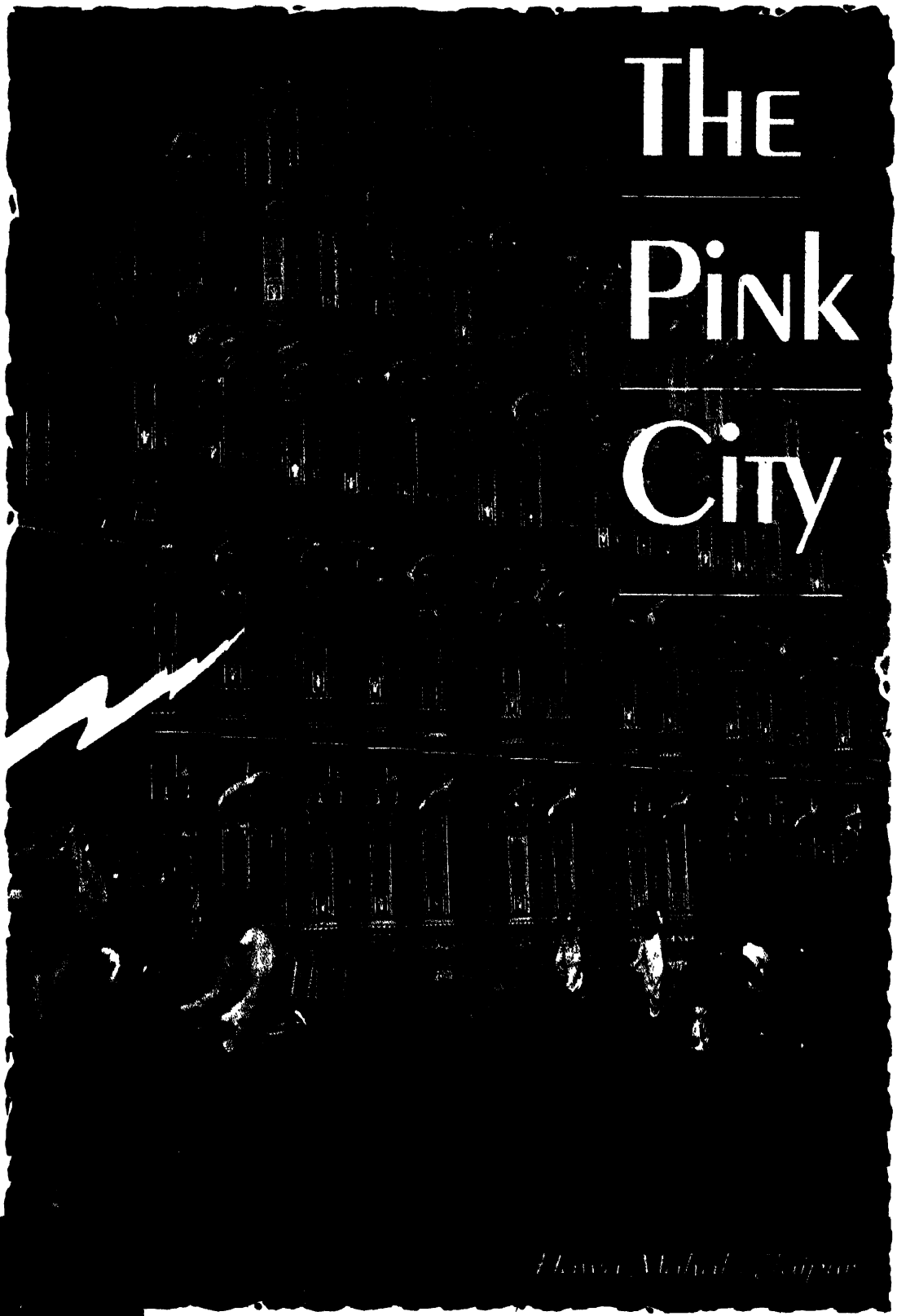
To strike (HI)
Suggest (HI)
To make difficult (HI)
A great mountain range (HI)
Seize a plane (HI)
A small mountain (HI)
Belonging to a boy (HI)

Summer Shimmer

Colour the picture below in the shades of summer and paste it in your scrapbook.



GOING PLACES



The Pink City

Hawa Mahal, Jaipur



Text : Brinda Gill
Transparency :
Satyajit Gill

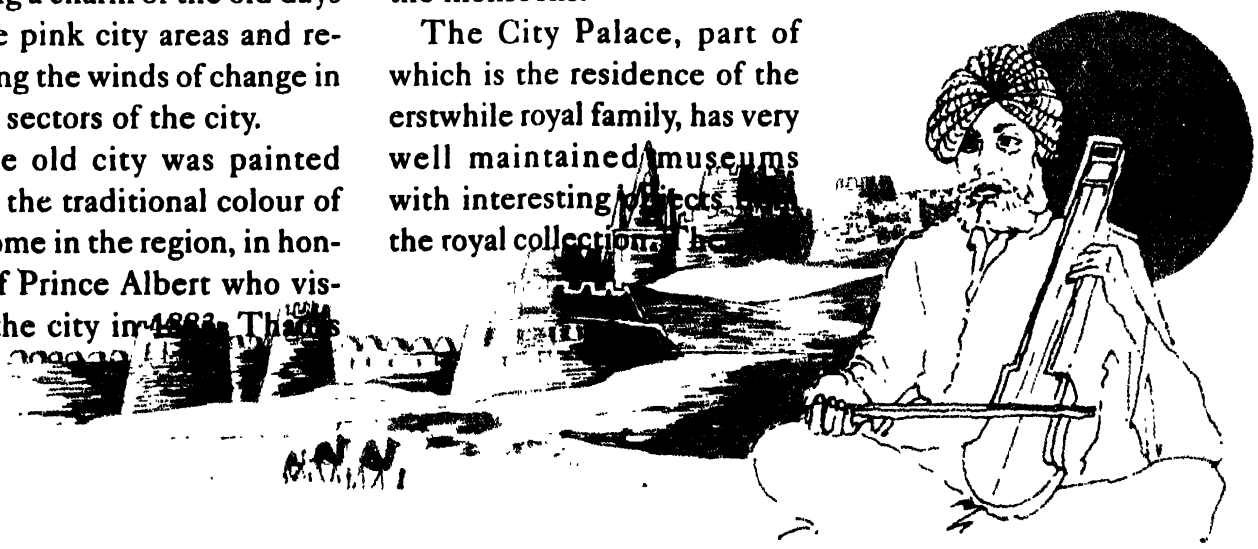


RAJASTHAN, the land of the chivalrous Rajputs, is well known for its beautiful palaces and impressive forts standing on rugged hills. Jaipur, the State capital, created by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II in 1728 and designed by Vidhyadhar Chakravorty was India's first planned city. The city plan was based on nine rectangular sectors as believed to symbolise the nine divisions of the universe according to ancient Indian thought. These nine sectors are intersected at right angles by the main streets and were encircled by a wall, pierced by seven gates. Since then the city has grown manifold, retaining a charm of the old days in the pink city areas and reflecting the winds of change in other sectors of the city.

The old city was painted pink, the traditional colour of welcome in the region, in honour of Prince Albert who visited the city in 1883. That's how the city received its name. Jaipur's best known monument is the Hawa Mahal or Palace of Winds, a five-storey, gently tapering facade with 953 small windows that create the effect of a honeycomb. The Hawa Mahal allowed the women of the royal family to observe the happenings on the street below without being seen, and a gentle breeze through the windows kept the structure cool. The streets must have provided them ample enjoyment, for even today there are colourful shops and much hustle. The streets are full of celebrations during Jaipur's main festivals—the Gangaur Festival held in honour of Goddess Parvati soon after Holi; the Elephant Festival held in March or April when the pachyderms are taken out in a procession and the Teej Festival to celebrate the onset of the monsoons.

The City Palace, part of which is the residence of the erstwhile royal family, has very well maintained museums with interesting objects from the royal collections. The beautiful paintings; a stunning collection of swords, spears, daggers and other weapons and armour; fine textiles and clothes; two huge silver jugs in which Maharaja Madho Singh II carried Ganges water during his visit to England! Near the City Palace is Jantar Mantar, an observatory built by Sawai Jai Singh II who was deeply interested in the study of the movements of the sun and the moon, stars and planets and the mysteries of the universe. After some experimentation he built large instruments of stone to make observations—the first observatory came up in Delhi followed by the one in Jaipur which is the largest of all. Three smaller ones were built at Ujjain, Varanasi and Mathura.

Before Jaipur was planned, the rulers reigned from Amber about 11 kilometres away. Moving towards Amber is



Gaitor, where stand white marble cenotaphs of the rulers of Jaipur. *Chattri* means an umbrella and is an extension of the *chattra* or umbrella which in ancient times reflected power and gradually was associated with royalty. Thus pillared kiosks were built as memorials to the rulers. Further ahead is the Jal Mahal which delicately sits afloat in the centre of the Man Sagar Lake. It was built by Maharaja Madho Singh I, who reigned from 1750–1768. Beyond is Kanak Vrindavan, a tranquil spot with temples and *chattris* near the lake.

The road then winds past a wooded hill to the pretty fort-palace of Amber built on the hill, overlooking the cool waters of the Maota Lake below. It is reached through massive gates and within are many beautiful palaces and gardens with water channels. The main attraction is the Sheesh Mahal or palace of mirrors which has a ceiling and walls inlaid with tiny mirrors that reflect the flame of a single match thousandfold creating the ambience of a star lit night! To keep a watch on Amber Fort, the Jaigarh Fort was built on the crest of the same hill. It has a distinct military character with double walls; the Jai Van is said to have one of the largest mounted guns in the world. The fort has an elaborate system of channels through which rain water was collected from the surrounding hills and stored. The third fort in the vicinity, the Nahalgarh Fort, has a palace complex and offers a sweeping view of the city of Jaipur below.

To the east of the city, on a hill is Moti Doongri, a small residential fort with the character of a Scottish castle, which remains in the private possession of the royal family. Below the hill is the dazzling white marble Laxmi Narayan Temple. Further ahead is Purana Ghat, between mountains, where stand the deserted homes of Vidhyadhar, the architect of Jaipur, and nobles. Vidhyadhar's garden nearby has trees, flower beds, water channels with a central pavilion. The Sisodia Rani Ka Bagh was landscaped by Sawai Jai Singh and his queen from Udaipur. It is a large multi-level garden embellished with fountains, water channels, with a small double storey palace decorated with paintings of Krishna as also hunting scenes. The road carries on through quiet forests to reach Galta, a sacred spot, wedged between two mountains. There are temples and tanks fed throughout the year by natural springs, and hundreds of pilgrims congregate on holy occasions for a dip in the tank. The structures here, though deserted, still have traces of paintings.

Apart from its monuments of the past, Jaipur is a busy centre of crafts. Sawai Jai Singh realised that the prosperity of his city depended on income from manufacturing and trading activities. Artists and craftsmen were encouraged to settle in Jaipur and were allotted space to work and live. Today Jaipur's crafts include gem setting, printed fabrics, garments, light *razais*, miniature paintings, silver articles, lac bangles, marble carvers, carpets, blue pottery, silver and gold leaf that is used to decorate sweets. Near Jaipur are the towns of Bagru and Sanganer well known for block printed fabric. Sanganer also makes handmade paper.

Almost 300 years since its creation, Jaipur retains much of its earlier charm; its old city having been meticulously planned, has managed to absorb a growing population. With constant exposure to appreciative visitors, craftsmen are encouraged to continue their folk tradition, and to convey their colourful crafts to different regions of India and the world.

INFORMATION: Jaipur is about 250 km. from Delhi and there is a regular bus and train service connecting the cities.

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A Summer Breeze

Sahodra Jha (13)
Illustrations: Beejee

As I sat among the trees
There came a sudden cooling breeze
So refreshing I started to sneeze
And with each sneeze along came the bees
Buzz, Buzz, Sneeze, Sneeze!



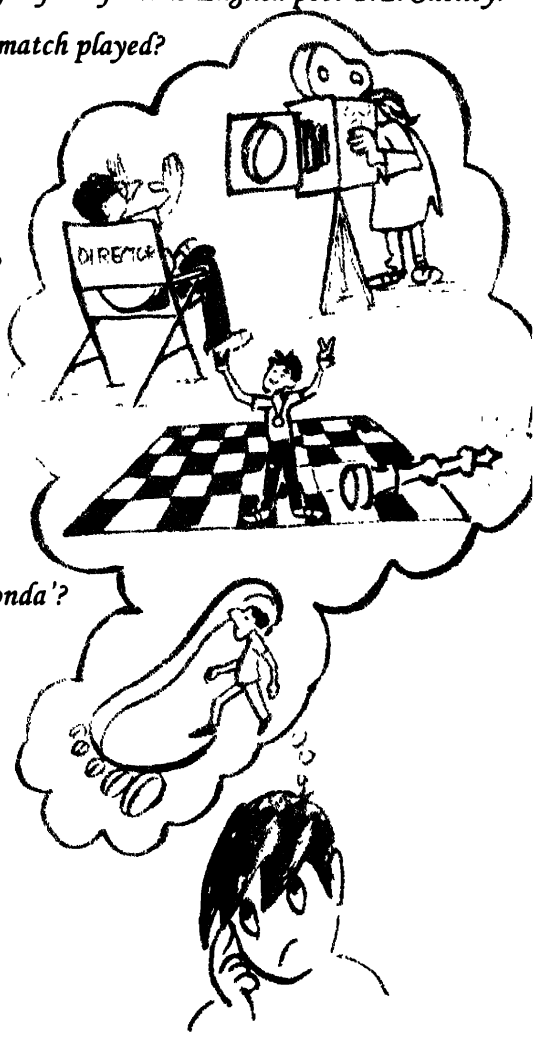
Oh my goodness, what a tease!
People gathered around to see
What the commotion was all about
There I sat quite transfixed
Watching the bees do their tricks
When suddenly there came a stronger breeze!
And along with it went the bees
But I was left alone to sneeze and sneeze.



Here's a quiz to perk you up. Send in your entries and if your answers are correct, you may win one of our two prizes— of Rs. 100/- each. Each entry must be accompanied by your subscription number or with a cheque for a year's subscription. Participants must be 16 years old or younger. Include your name, age, address and the name of your school. Last date for receiving entries: June 1, 1997. You could also fax your entries to us at 11-3721090.

By Sudha Sanjeev

1. *Who founded Homeopathy?*
2. *What is the name of the horror novel written by Mary Shelley, wife of the famous English poet P.B. Shelley?*
3. *Between which two countries was the first international cricket match played?*
4. *Which is the brightest star in the sky?*
5. *Who sculpted the famous 'The Thinker'?*
6. *Which director made it a point to appear in each of his movies?*
7. *Under whose leadership did Bangladesh come into being in 1972?*
8. *Who was the first Commander-in-Chief of free India?*
9. *Which mythological creature is half man half horse?*
10. *Who wrote 'Rip Van Winkle'?*
11. *Who pioneered vaccination?*
12. *Name the first Indian to win the Grandmaster title in chess?*
13. *Which painting by Leonardo da Vinci is also known as 'La Gioconda'?*
14. *What is the parliament of Japan called?*
15. *What is the old name of India Gate in New Delhi?*
16. *In which novel does the place Lilliput occur?*
17. *Who said, "A small step for men, a giant step for mankind"?*
18. *Who said, "Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny..."?*
19. *Heinous : wicked :: gentle : d_ _ _ _ _ t*
20. *Calm : agitated :: Pliable : r_ _ _ d*

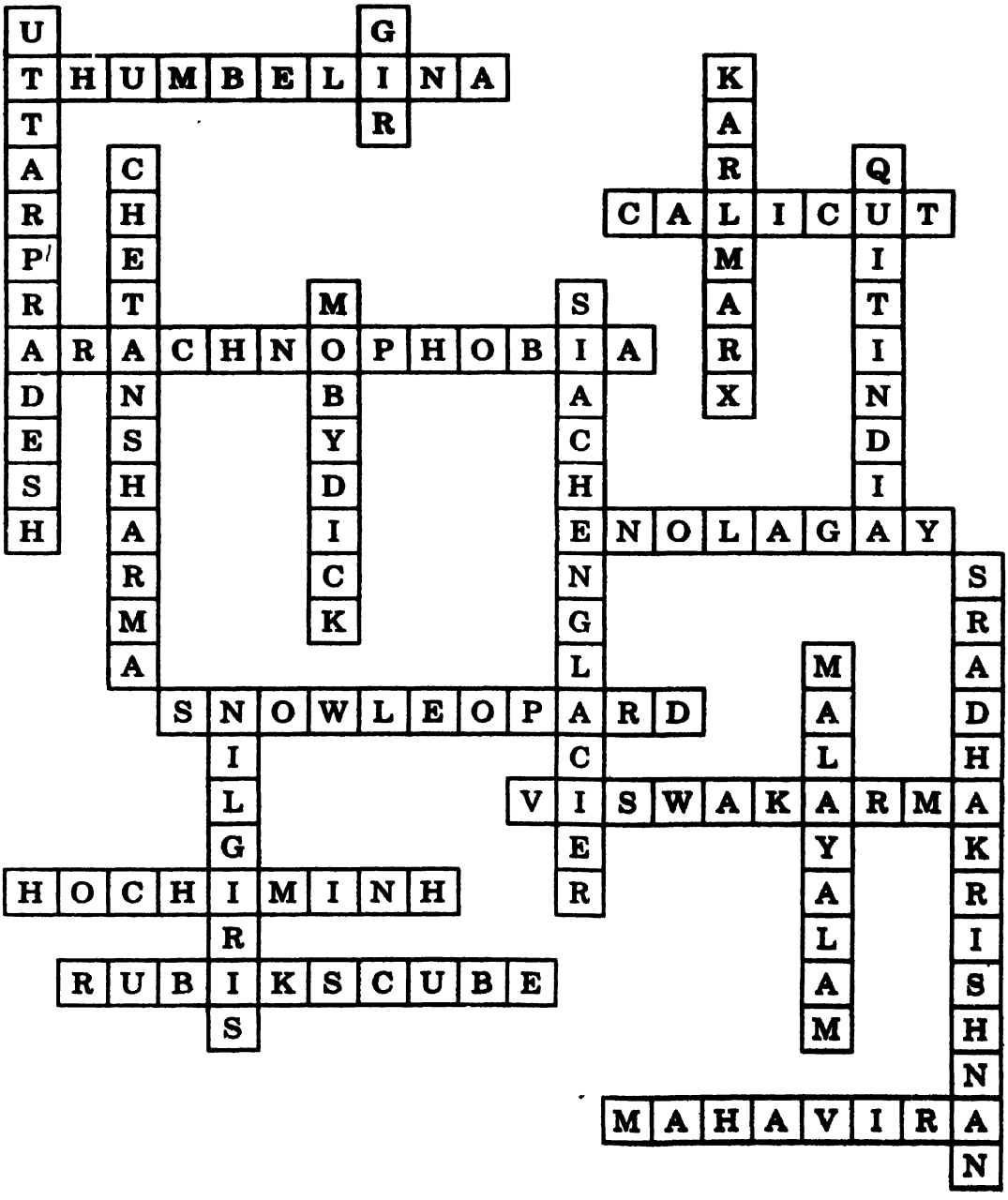


W Bonanza! At the end of twelve issues, there will be a Special Bumper Prize drawn by lot from among the 24 winners of the year. So come on, folks! Get cracking!

No all-correct entry received for Crossroads 15.

Answers to
CROSSROADS 15
Assortedly Yours!

S.S.



PANDA CLUB OF INDIA

Newsletter Vol. I No. 4

Hi friends,

Thank you for your letters, slogans, enthusiastic responses to our quizzes, puzzles and competitions. And a big 'Hi!' to all new PANDA CLUB members and CW readers. Of course, I am so happy with all the love you have showered on me. I sing and smile when I read your letters. A special 'THANK YOU' to all my friends. I would like to invite those of you who have not enrolled as members and subscribers to do so now. This summer vacation, we are going to have loads of fun!

A special message for all of you—keep writing and send us your opinion on the Panda Club shows that keep you enthralled. Tell us also how you would like to see Panda Club grow with CW.

As our friendship begins to bond, I want to share a thought with you. Take it as something that comes from someone who cares. Why don't you spend this summer doing constructive things—things that are fun, things that are exciting. I'm sure that you want to laze and wake up late. But, for a change, try to wake up with the call of the morning birds, go for a brisk walk, jog, cycle with friends... The choice is yours—to think what will make you different and what will make you see and enjoy nature, and what will make your mind and body sharp and healthy. I'm not saying don't watch TV but do watch interesting programmes, particularly shows for the young. Whatever you do, write in, ever send in photographs of your experiences. I will pick the best and carry them in the magazine—I'm sure it will make you and everyone proud. So give it your best one.

Some of the things that my friends like you around the world do in their free time are—trying simple recipes (with someone supervising), gardening, trekking, different arts and crafts, helping the less privileged, reading, taking care of pets, perhaps, running a small library, or opening a hobby club.

So here's a wish from your friend for life—have a wonderful vacation!

With love,

Panda

Dear Panda,
I'll be your friend, not in the zoo, but through CW! We'll have fun and increase our knowledge.
With love,
Sakshi Batra, New Delhi

You and in CW! Amazing, fascinating and exciting too! My friends send a message, "Hi, Panda, we all love you." I say, "Long live the Panda Club!"
Lots of love,
T. Venu Gopal, New Delhi

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FSE

Some of the characters of our Panda Club shows—PAQUITO, MR. WILSON, PRIA, DENNIS, RIMBA SAMURAI, OOKI, ILANA, BAKARI, GRAFT, RUFF, and MING—have been bound together as one large family in this puzzle. The words are listed in a straight line: forwards, backwards, up, down or diagonally. Can you find them all?

Colour the names on the grid, and also let us know which shows they star in.

O	M	P	J	Y	F	D	R	D	L	M	R
P	R	I	A	W	Q	E	H	X	P	L	I
T	W	R	E	Q	E	N	C	Z	A	P	L
M	I	N	G	J	U	N	F	R	W	S	S
I	L	R	A	V	R	I	M	B	A	H	H
T	S	U	H	K	L	S	T	M	O	U	S
J	O	E	Y	W	H	U	U	O	O	K	I
D	N	O	K	N	D	R	W	G	W	L	L
P	O	Y	T	B	A	K	A	R	I	G	A
G	H	P	D	I	I	C	E	U	W	I	N
O	P	L	K	H	G	R	A	F	T	D	A
R	S	W	E	A	T	P	K	F	L	O	P



WINNERS ALL!

The three best entries of the 'Pria Colouring Contest' are:

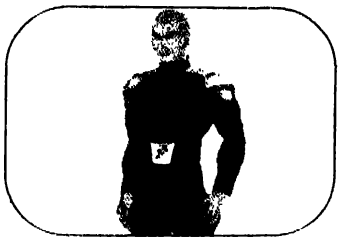
1. Kanika Gupta, New Delhi
2. B. Mathanki, New Delhi
3. Nitika Sindhu, New Delhi

Congratulations! You will receive a gift from *STIC* Colour Stix soon.

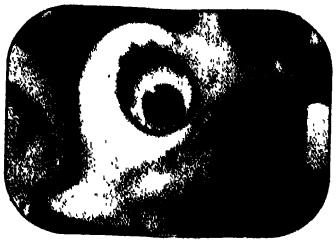
Answers to RIMBA'S ISLAND PUZZLE (based on DD Metro shows, March issue of CW)

1. Pineapple Cake
2. Ming, the Merciless
3. Sam Collins
4. Ruff
5. Natives of the Deep Wood
6. The Lion-headed Man
7. Paquito
8. Phantom, Flash Gordon and Mandrake
9. Joey, Margaret and Gina
10. (The drawing sent was accurate.)

We received a number of entries for this puzzle. However, only one entry was all-correct. And the lucky winner is **IRFAN SHAIKH** from Ahmedabad. Congratulations, Irfan! You will receive a gift from Archies Gifts and Greetings



Monday 5.30 P.M. on DD II—FLASH GORDON : On a vital mission to save planet Earth from 'Ming the Merciless', Flash Gordon makes a rocket journey to the planet Mongo. Join the adventures of Flash Gordon.



Tuesday 5.30 P.M. on DD II—RIMBA'S ISLAND : Six lively, lovable, colourful costumed animal characters who dwell deep in the idyllic rain forest, share their joys and learn from one another catchy songs and simple stories—(dubbed in Hindi)



Thursday 5.00 P.M. on DD II—SUPERHUMAN SAMURAI SYBER SQUAD : Sam Collins, a video game champion and leader of a teenage garage band, fights an alien warlord 'Kilokahn' who has infected the digital world with monster "megaviruses."

PANDA CLUB

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The Card entitles ONLY the card-holding members to the following benefits.

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New Delhi-110016

No. 2 Krishnamma Road
Nungambakkam
Chennai-600034, India



Thursday 5.30 P.M. on DD II—PHANTOM :
The legendary Lord of the jungle—Phantom, is incredible. Phantom uses the secrets taught by the natives of the deep woods to fight and conquer crime.



Saturday 6.00 P.M. on DD II—DENNIS THE MENACE : Irrepressible Dennis and his unwilling best friend, the grumpy Mr. Wilson will enthral you with their hilarious antics and send you into splits.



From April 5 5.30P.M. on DD II—DEFENDERS OF THE EARTH : Led by the Phantom, Flash Gordon and Mandrake the Magician challenge 'Ming' in a series of great adventures. They use powerful computers and space age technology to combat and overpower him.

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CITY _____ **PHONE** _____

SCHOOL _____



CLASS _____ **BIRTHDAY** _____

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NAME _____

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DATE OF ISSUE _____ **MEMBERSHIP NUMBER** _____

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PANDA CLUB

1 Solve the 'Missing Links' puzzle. On a separate sheet of paper, write down the names of the shows they star in.
2 Cut out the blank Panda Club Member- ship Card (B). Get a stamp size (2.5x 2.5 cm) colour photograph of yours.
3 Complete the CW Subscription Form and send it with the Money Order/ Demand Draft/Cheque payable to Children's World.
4 Put all the above in an envelope addressed to: 'Panda Club of India', First Serve Entertainment India Pvt. Ltd., C-2/62, II Floor, Safdarjang Development Area, New Delhi-110 016

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YOUR CALENDAR OF PANDA CLUB SHOWS ON DD

CHANNEL	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT

The treasure of Kumbher

Story: Krishna Narayan
Illustrations : Nilabho Dhar Chowdhury

Prithviraj Chandola, now a trained soldier, is on his way to join Senor Noronha's army, camped outside Kumbher. On the way he rescues an old man and his daughter from some ruffians. When he comes to know that Prithviraj is going to Kumbher, the old man hands him a ring to give to Jai Singh, Prince of Kumbher.



Part 9

THE WEEK that followed Ismail Beg's capture of Kumbher will ever be remembered as the darkest period in the history of that city. As if to avenge his earlier defeat, he and Abdel Khan went on a mindless rampage, unleashing a brand of cruelty never seen before or since. Innocent men were tortured. Women were pulled out of their homes and insulted. Shops and houses were razed to the ground. Blood was everywhere.

Janki Devi's army did not lag behind either. Ever on the look-out for easy pickings, some of them switched loyalties and gleefully went about looting their own people. The palace was stripped and defaced. The royal gardens were laid to waste. Old and defenceless relatives of the royal

family were whipped and imprisoned; the king's generals were put to death.

At about the same time Janki Devi was taken seriously ill, and confined to bed. Kunwar Singh, who had never seen this face of Ismail Beg before, was terrified. Without the support of his mother, he simply decided to stay out of sight for a while.

Ismail Beg awoke early. As usual, it filled him with pleasurable surprise to find himself, not in a leaky tent in Najibabad, but in Raja Balwant Singh's bedchamber. He lay in bed for a while, then rose and opened the window.

A light mist hung over Kumbher. Ismail Beg inhaled deeply, ignoring the unpleasant chill in the air. He flexed his lithe body, surveying the city below him, savouring his victory yet again.

The victory was not complete, however. Two tasks remained: first, the capture of Raja Balwant Singh; second, the capture of the royal treasure. No progress had been made on either. Indeed, Ismail Beg had been so confident of success that he could not believe it. His expression changed to an ugly frown.

He walked quickly down the steps and out of the palace. The sentries—now his own men—sprang to attention as he passed. He crossed a stretch of garden, crossed the



outhouses and the royal stables, ignoring the startled looks of the retainers who hurriedly made way for him. He turned the corner and descended the stone staircase that led to the palace dungeons. There, in the middle of the bare, torch-lit room he stood, arms akimbo, and regarded his prisoner.

Jai Singh hung spread-eagled against the wall. Heavy chains ran round his wrists and ankles. Fat purple welts from the whip scarred his stomach and thighs. His head lolled to one side, his eyes were shut. Ismail Beg walked upto the prince and prodded him. Jai Singh stirred.

"Where is the treasure room?" asked Ismail Beg.

Jai Singh's eyes flickered open, then closed. Ismail Beg slapped Jai Singh's cheek, and he moaned. "Answer me," said Ismail Beg. His voice was pleasant, as if he were coaxing a reply from a child.

Jai Singh showed no signs of having heard. Ismail Beg's eyes froze into chips of granite. He was tempted to grab Jai Singh by the neck and shake the truth out of him but stayed his hand; the prince was on the point of collapse.

He turned to go when he heard someone descend the dungeon steps. He flattened himself against a recess in the

granite walls and waited. It was Kunwar Singh, muttering to himself. His fleshy face glistened in the torchlight as he passed Ismail Beg and went upto Jai Singh. "Jai Singh," he called in a loud whisper, "have you told them anything?" He shook Jai Singh's shoulders. "The treasure, where is it? Can you hear me? God, what has that madman done to you?"

"I haven't finished with him yet," said Ismail Beg stepping out of the shadows. Kunwar Singh whirled around, his face white as a sheet.

"You?"

"At your service," said Ismail Beg with a wicked gleam in his eyes. "It has been a long time, my friend. Where have you been hiding all this while?"

"You fool, can't you see you are killing him?"

"He is killing himself. He refuses to talk. Incidentally, how did you enter the palace grounds? Didn't my men stop you?"

"You will bear in mind that I am of royal blood," replied Kunwar Singh huffily. "Your oafs dare not stop me." He paused, "May I also remind you that I am responsible for your presence here in Kumbher?"

Ismail Beg threw his head back and laughed. "Yes, of course. We are together in this, are we not?"

Kunwar Singh positioned his portly frame before Ismail Beg. "It is ten days since you entered the city. You have still to settle with me and my mother."

"As soon as I find the treasure," said Ismail Beg smoothly. "And now, my friend, I have to go."

"Your men have stripped the palace of everything of value. They have looted the granary and the storerooms," Kunwar Singh's voice rose to a shout. "Soon there will be nothing left in Kumbher. We want our share now!"

"Don't shout at me, or I will have your tongue torn out by the roots," snarled Ismail Beg with such malevolence that Kunwar Singh shrank back in horror. Suddenly Ismail Beg flashed a grin. "Let us talk later, shall we?" With that he side-stepped Kunwar Singh, ran up the steps and was gone. Kunwar Singh found his limbs trembling. He realised that he was powerless, that the control of the situation had passed into the hands of Ismail Beg. He had been a fool. What if Ismail Beg cheated him and his mother and gave them nothing, nothing at all? His heart quailed at the thought.

There were other things that bothered Kunwar Singh. His treachery had made him the prime target of the king's loyalists. It was only a matter of time before they reorganised themselves into a fighting unit. When that happened, his life would be worthless. To make matters worse, his own men were deserting him for Ismail Beg's side. Perhaps they knew, better than him, where the real power lay!

His mother, still sick, was not yet aware of the situation. He had pretended that he and Ismail Beg were in constant touch, that the palace was being done up so that she could move in. Maybe he ought to tell her the truth before things got any worse.

Kunwar Singh went up to his cousin and inspected his tortured body. Jai Singh's condition alarmed him. Did not that fool Ismail Beg realise that Jai Singh was their only insurance against a do-or-die encounter with the loyalists?

Two men came tripping down the dungeon steps. Before Kunwar Singh realised it, he found his hands pinned behind his back and hustled up the steps. Ismail Beg's sentries half-dragged, half-carried him past the stables to the servants' gate and tossed him out into the dust. Kunwar Singh scrambled to his feet, wailing, protesting, humiliated to tears. The sentries lounged at the gates watching him insolently, making sure he did not re-enter.

Kunwar Singh went to his mother and blurted out the true state of affairs.



"You must be the biggest fool in the world to have trusted that man!" fumed Janki Devi pacing her room. Her enormous black robe swirled like a dark cloud as she turned. "And why did you hide the truth from me all this while? It is too late now!" She smote her forehead. "I am the bigger fool for trusting your judgement. Lord, what have I done to deserve a son like you?"

Kunwar Singh sat in the corner like a repentant child. He took his mother's tongue-lashing without demur, allowing her to let off steam. He knew that finally she would think of something. His mother had never let him down.

"What do we do now?" said Janki Devi at last. Kunwar Singh held his tongue and looked up at her piteously.

"Get out of my sight!"

screeched Janki Devi. "I will call you when I need you!"

Kunwar Singh scrambled out of the room. Janki Devi sank on the couch in deep thought, plotting her way out of the mess she found herself in.

Ismail Beg's mood as he stormed into the palace was scarcely better. He was aware that the consolidation of his position in Kumbher depended on finding the treasure at the earliest. Janki Devi's troops still far outnumbered his own, and it would not be long before her antagonism converted itself to open conflict. The sympathisers to the throne would then, unhesitatingly, throw their lot in with her. Ismail Beg regretted that he had not given in to his impulse and murdered her that night when he entered Kumbher.

Where was the accursed treasure?

The search for the palace strongroom had been extremely methodical. Ismail Beg and his trusted associates had proceeded from room to room, and no place, however unlikely, was overlooked. The floors were inspected for false bottoms, the roof for false ceilings. Pillars were broken on suspicion of being hollow. Every square inch of the garden was dug up; the pond was emptied and scavenged. Ismail Beg unearthed antique chests and huge copper cauldrons which were all empty. He discovered underground cellars that held nothing and passages that led nowhere. His men had now fanned out to the outhouses—the servants' quarters, the stables, the granaries. Their enthusiasm had waned, however. No one but a madman would hide his treasure where he could not keep watch over it! Some of them went so far as to declare that there never existed a treasure in the first place.

Ismail Beg sat on the couch in the palace hall, morosely watching his deputy Abdel Khan move along the wall, knocking as he went, listening for a hollow sound. The tapping infuriated him.

"Stop it, will you?" he growled. Abdel Khan gave him a puzzled look and retreated in haste. Ismail Beg rose, and for the hundredth time prowled restlessly within the palace.

The rooms that till recently resounded with music and laughter, were quiet. The palace servants had vanished, their place taken by Ismail Beg's personal guards—unkempt, cruel-eyed men, who hung about in the doorways and the corridors.

Ismail Beg opened and shut doors absently, running his eyes over surfaces and ceilings. He went up to the first floor, then came down again till he reached a closed door at the rear of the palace, before which sat an old woman who looked at him fearfully as he approached. He did not open that door. He had done so only once, on the day following the capture of Kumbher; his flesh still crawled at the memory. On that day, ignoring the maidservant's protests, he had kicked the door off its hinges and forced it open. He had seen a cot, and a covered body, and had thrown the white sheet back to reveal the horrible sight beneath. He saw the bald head and the shrivelled neck of a creature that was scarcely human. The eyes were open; black pupils burned in their sockets. Fat, black maggots scurried all over, feasting on the rotting flesh. The overpowering stench caused him to vomit.

The eyes in the skull had moved in their sockets and fixed him with a dead stare. Ismail Beg, no stranger to horrid sights, felt a shiver go down his spine. He had dropped the sheet and backed away hurriedly, never to enter the room again.

Ismail Beg now took out his frustration on the old lady by giving her a spiteful kick. She squealed in pain, and it made him feel better. As he walked back to the bedchamber, he pondered over what he ought to do next.

(To be continued)

PUZZLE PAGE

Riddle Me Ree!

What has two feet and no legs?

What character got all his work done by Friday?

Why did the boy try to feed coins to his cat?

Why is a river always rich?

Why is a playground larger at recess?

How many sides does a circle have?

Why is tennis such a noisy game?

Because players always raise a racket.
Two—inside and outside
Because there are more feet in it
Because it has a bank on each side
Because his Mom told him to put his money in the kitty
Robinson Crusoe
Twenty-four inches

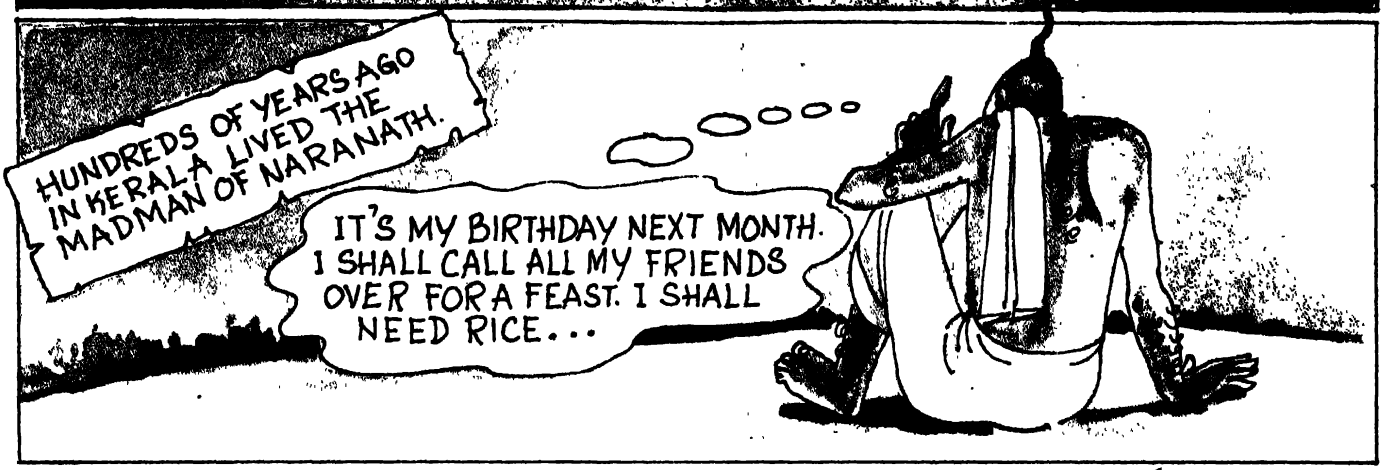
The Large Jul Musicians

Identify the musical instruments the musicians are supposed to be playing.



The Madman of Naranath

STORY: SHANKAR ILLUSTRATIONS: Beeje










TWO DAYS LATER
HERE, BROTHER, ARE YOUR POTS AND PANS. THANK YOU FOR LENDING THEM TO ME.
THESE SMALL ONES ARE NOT OURS. THERE'S BEEN SOME MIX-UP.
THERE'S BEEN NO MIX-UP AT ALL. MY UNDERGROUND CELLAR, WHERE I PUT ALL THESE IN, HAS SOME MAGIC POWERS...
...ONE DAY I FOUND THEM ALL SINGING AND DANCING. I DIDN'T WANT TO DISTURB THEM SO I COULDN'T RETURN YOUR VESSELS EARLIER...
...NOW I FIND EACH ONE HAD A BABY. SINCE THESE POTS AND PANS AREN'T MINE, THEREFORE, NEITHER ARE THEIR BABIES...
...I'M ONLY GIVING YOU WHAT IS YOURS.


THE FOLLOWING YEAR
I WANT TO OBSERVE MY FATHER'S DEATH ANNIVERSARY...
... AND FEED A THOUSAND PEOPLE. COULD I BORROW YOUR POTS AND PANS AGAIN?
GLADLY! WE'LL BRING THEM OVER OURSELVES.
AFTER THE FEAST
HIRE TWO COUNTRY BOATS. LOAD ALL THESE VESSELS ON TO THEM AND TAKE THEM TO TOWN. WE'LL SELL THEM THERE. I SHALL MAKE LOTS OF MONEY.
MANY DAYS PASS BY
PLEASE RETURN OUR POTS AND PANS.
WHAT POTS AND PANS?...


...I DON'T THINK I HAVE ANY WITH ME.
HOW DARE YOU SAY THAT! WE LENT THEM TO YOU FOR YOUR FEAST AND YOU SAY YOU NEVER BORROWED ANY.
PLEASE DON'T SHOUT. YES, I DID BORROW YOUR POTS AND PANS BUT I PUT THEM IN MY CELLAR. NOW THEY AREN'T THERE.
THEN WHERE ARE THEY?
I DON'T KNOW.
WE'LL SEE YOU IN COURT.
IN THE COURT
YOU ARE CHARGED WITH CHEATING ALL THESE PEOPLE. I ORDER YOU TO RETURN ALL THEIR POTS AND PANS.
SIR, I'M NOT GUILTY. MY CELLAR HAS MAGIC POWERS. WHEN THEIR POTS HAD BABIES IN THE CELLAR, THEY ACCEPTED THE BABY POTS WITH THE MOTHER POTS. NOW WHEN I STORED THE VESSELS IN THE CELLAR, EACH ONE DIED. NOT ONE WAS LEFT. SIR, IF YOU ADMIT BIRTH, YOU MUST ADMIT DEATH AS WELL.
YES, I SEE THE LOGIC OF YOUR ARGUMENT. CASE DISMISSED!
END

A matter of faith

Story : Cheryl Rao
Illustrations :
Ajanta Guhathakurta



RAJESH CLOSED the door quietly and crept down the stairs. He held his shoes in his hands and his movements were noiseless. Suddenly, he stopped. He thought he heard someone's voice. 'Has Mama or Papa awakened?' he asked himself, half in fear and half in hope. He was trembling and there was the same strange, sinking feeling within him that, until now, he had felt only when he thought of the exams coming up in March.

'What will happen if someone sees me?' he wondered. 'Will I be stopped from doing what I plan to do?' He almost wished that he would be thwarted in his attempt to run away. He put his head out of the front door. The world outside seemed cold and lonely. Inwardly, he quaked with fear. 'I'm only 17 years old,' he thought. 'How will I manage on my own?'

Then he gave himself a mental shake, patted his wallet and shrugged himself into his backpack. He put on his shoes and walked out into the driveway, unconcerned about the crunch of gravel beneath his feet. His parents' bedroom was at the rear of the house, on the first floor. They would not hear him now.

Rajesh had timed his getaway well. It was still dark, but already a few hawkers were about. It was chilly and he shivered a bit; but as he walked, he felt better. By the time he reached the railway station, the local trains would have started.

He walked along briskly, grateful that he had always been tall for his age and had filled out nicely in the past two years. Now, at 5'11", he looked a man. That is, if no one looked at his face, he thought. He turned up his collar, pulled down the cap he wore to protect himself from the breeze and carried on walking as confidently as he could.

When he reached the station, he saw that there was plenty of time for the train. He dug into his pocket and took out the money he had set aside for his ticket. He asked for a



ticket, pocketed the change and moved onto the platform. When he finally got into the local, and relaxed against his seat, he thought of the anxieties of the past few months.

It had been building up for years, but no one had paid attention to his needs. How he hated studying those awful science subjects! The hours spent on Physics tuitions, Chemistry tuitions and Biology tuitions left him with no time for his drawing. The last comic strip he had started had not yet been concluded.

How can I think of the best way to get Suraj the Sun-Man out of the clutches of the aliens if I have to memorise complex formulae of inorganic elements and compounds? Why can't Mama and Papa understand I have no interest in Science or in Medicine? I don't want to be a surgeon like Pa or a doctor like Mama? I just want to be myself!'

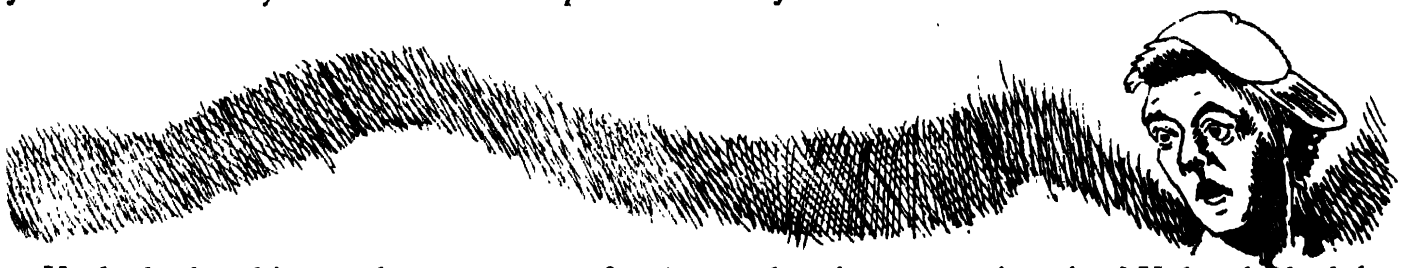
He looked at his watch as the local ground to a halt and he walked into the sunshine. "7.30 already!" He grimaced. Suresh would be leaving for school now and the house would be in an uproar. Mama would be calling, "You've forgotten your tiffin box!" Papa would be saying, "The rickshaw is here, hurry up!" And Suresh, that little brat of eight, would saunter out with his mouth full, taking for granted the fuss being made for him.

No one would think of peeping into Rajesh's room to look for that note he had left on the table. Rajesh was the big brother, the almost-adult; it was a long foregone conclusion that he would be dutiful. Suresh was still small. He had no responsibilities yet. If he was playful and did not study it did not matter.

But if Rajesh did not study— oh, ho! that would not do. Mama and Papa seemed to have nothing to say to him other than, "How is the preparation going?", "Have you cleared your doubts with the tuition master?" or "Have you given in the last batch of tutorials to the Academy?"

Papa would forget that he had promised Rajesh the scooter for the weekend, yet he would not forget the date of the next tutorial. "At times I feel that I don't exist," muttered Rajesh to himself, to the surprise of the man walking in front of him. "I am only the next assignment, the next test, the next exam. Those dates exist, I don't! Well, now everyone will wake up and realise that I am not an exam paper, but a person."

Without realising it, Rajesh's feet had taken him into the Public Gardens. He sat down on the grass and opened his bag. Inside were his drawing papers, his pencils and pens. There was a faint rumble of hunger from his tummy, but he ignored it. He emptied his mind of the resentful thoughts of his family and instead, tried to concentrate on the cartoon story he was writing. Until now, he had been entertaining Suresh and his friends with his cartoon creations. He had invented a character called Suraj who had the most improbable adventures, and those young boys had just lapped them up. But it was time for the real test. Would he be able to sell that character? Would he win a name for himself as a comic strip writer? Unless he had the time to try, he could not hope to find out.

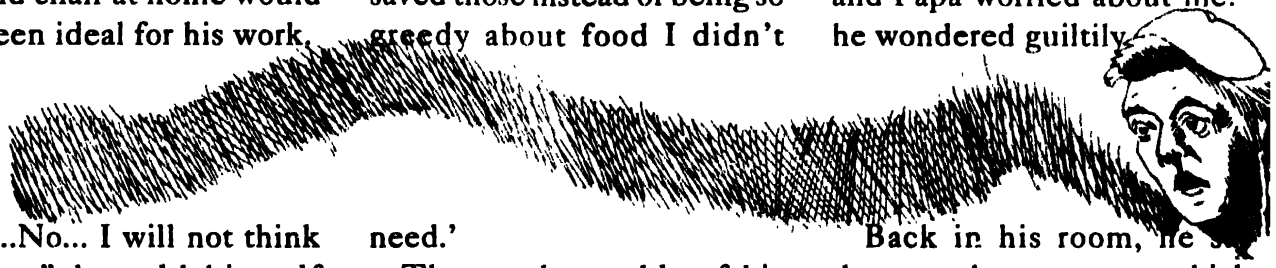


The morning passed swiftly. When the soft drink and snacks booth opened, he bought himself a cola and a packet of chips. He thought of the thousand rupees in his

wallet and tried to calculate how long it would last him.

"I must find a place to stay," he decided some hours later when, again, his stomach told him that it needed a refill.

He walked out of the Gardens at four in the evening. Not even a quarter of his story was done. There were still so many ideas and situations churning in his mind, but his neck and back ached from sitting crouched on the grass. His desk and chair at home would have been ideal for his work.



"No...No... I will not think of home," he told himself sternly. "That desk has place only for Physics, Chemistry and Biology, not for cartoon adventures or anything to do with art!"

He walked for almost an hour, until he was in a less posh-looking area than that surrounding the Railway Station. He began to look at the buildings to see whether there were any cheap boarding and lodging houses. It took him another hour and six refusals before he finally got himself a room to live in.

The lodge was seedy-looking and when he entered he saw cockroaches scuttling into the corners. What a contrast from the antiseptic home his mother ran! But at Rs. 200 a month, it was the only affordable room he could find.

'Almost a quarter of my money is over!' Rajesh speculated as he laid his bag on the bed and took out his papers. 'How much will I need for my food?' He thought of the many fifty and hundred rupee notes his father gave him each month when he went out with his friends. How quickly those had vanished on pizzas and hamburgers! 'I wish I had saved those instead of being so greedy about food I didn't need.'

The steady rumble of his stomach reminded him again that he hadn't eaten a square meal all day. He walked across the road and entered a crowded restaurant. It wasn't the type of place he or his friends would have stepped into, but now he had no choice. For ten rupees he got a *thali* with as much vegetable and rice as he wanted and he ate to his heart's content. The food tasted quite unlike what he had at home, but hunger made him relish it. How Mama would laugh if she saw him! Tears stung Rajesh's eyes as he thought of Mama serving him and telling him to eat well. "There's no substitute for good, wholesome home food," she always said. How right she was!

He shook himself free of thoughts of home for the nth time that day.

Strange. He had been out for weekends and for holidays with his friends, but he had never been homesick. Why was home on his mind all the time now, when he had barely left it twelve hours ago? Perhaps because he knew that this time, he had made a final break with home. 'Are Mama and Papa worried about me?' he wondered guiltily.

Back in his room, he down on the narrow cot which sagged in the centre, and tried to complete some more pictures of the comic. It grew dark outside. Inside, the light was poor. For a while, Rajesh strained his eyes and neck; then he put aside his pens and paper and lay back to rest.

It seemed that hardly a minute had gone by before he was awakened by loud voices in the corridor. He turned over and covered his ears with his hands, but the sounds penetrated and would not let him return to his sleep.

Suddenly, there was a banging on his door. Unsuspectingly, Rajesh got up from the bed and threw the door open. When he saw who stood there, he took a step backward, then

recovered and tried to shut the door; but the look on his face made one of the men stick his foot in the door.

No one noticed Rajesh's absence that morning. He had holidays because the pre-Boards began in a few days and he often stayed up until late at night to study. He usually slept late, preferring to wake up when everyone had left the house and there was silence once again. So his room was left as it was until whatever time he emerged.

At lunch time that day, Suresh and his mother were alone, but this too was common. Suresh, as usual, monopolised the conversation, telling Mrs. Rekha Chandra all about his activities in school. His mother listened with a half smile, indulgently allowing him to exaggerate his role into that of the hero in every game he played with his classmates.

Mrs. Chandra was tired after a busy morning at her clinic and she presumed that Rajesh had eaten early and gone for his tuitions as he usually did. It was not until seven in the evening, when her elder son should have returned from the extra classes they had signed him up for, that Mrs. Chandra walked into his room to ask him how his day had been.

She was surprised to see it as neat as a pin. No open books on the table, no shoes flung into a corner, no clothes thrown on the bed. "Shantabai!" she called out. "Did you clear up Rajesh's room?" she asked when Shantabai entered.

"No, I didn't," replied the maid. "You and Rajesh have told me time and again not to touch anything in here. I didn't come in."

Mrs. Chandra looked around again. This time she spotted the white envelope lying on the bedside table. There was a simple address on it in Rajesh's handwriting. 'Mama and Papa,' it said. Mrs. Chandra felt a terrible dread as she picked it up. She was reluctant to open the envelope. Her hands shook, but somehow, she slid out the notepaper and read what her son had written.

"I cannot be the person you want," Rajesh's note said. "I have gone away to make my own life. Do not try to find me and ruin my future."

Mrs. Chandra was puzzled. What had Rajesh tried to say? He had run away. That was clear. But what plans did he have for himself that they, his parents, were going to ruin by trying to get him back home? At 17, how could he survive on his own? How much money did he have with him?

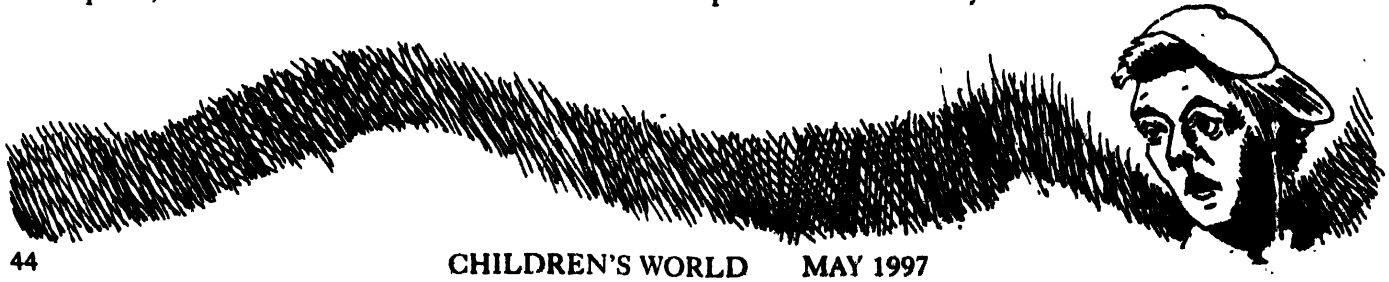
"Oh, Lord," she muttered, sinking onto Rajesh's bed. "What has the boy done? Why was I not aware that he was unhappy?"

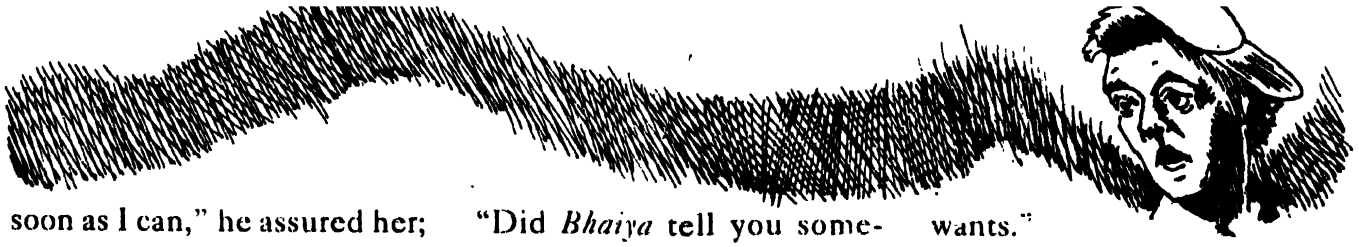
She forgot that Shantabai was still in the doorway, looking at her aghast. She rushed to her own room and picked up the phone. "Dr. Chandra is busy," the receptionist said, when she got through to the hospital.

"Just get him on the line, Madhuri, this is an emergency," Mrs. Chandra.

"Sure, Doctor, sure," replied the receptionist hastily, wondering what had happened to make the usually gentle wife of her boss so waspish. She paged the surgeon, who was in the I.C.U. and he too snapped at her. "Just not my lucky evening!" she shrugged.

Dr. Tarun Chandra's mind was on the rapidly failing patient who had not responded to surgery; but he was shaken out of his involvement, with the information given to him by his wife. "I'll be back as





soon as I can," he assured her; and for a change, he was.

He too was puzzled by the wording of his son's letter. What was the boy trying to say? How could they, his own parents, ruin his future by bringing him home and continuing to give him all the love and care they'd given him for the past seventeen years? They had not been heavy-handed parents, or at least, he didn't think so. They had given Rajesh a great deal of freedom and he had always been dutiful. What had happened to the boy suddenly?

"Do you think he's fallen into bad company without our being aware of it?" he asked.

"He hasn't mentioned any new friends recently. He still gets the same old calls. Oh, Tarun, what are we going to do? Shouldn't we inform the police? Raju could have gone anywhere! For all we know, he could be in another city by now! We haven't seen him since last evening and we don't know when he left the house."

"Ask Suresh, he may know something."

They called their younger son to them. He sensed that something terrible had happened and he started to cry. "Did *Bhaiya* tell you something and make you promise to keep it a secret?" asked Mrs. Chandra.

Suresh just stared at his parents with tears rolling down his cheeks. Mrs. Chandra was convinced by the look on his face that he knew his big brother's plans.

"*Bhaiya* has left the house and we don't know where he has gone. He may get hurt. We are worried. If you know anything, tell us. Don't think that you are breaking a promise, because telling us could save Rajesh's life. We must know where he is."

"I don't know anything, I don't know!" wept Suresh.

"Then why are you crying?" asked his father.

"Because you are looking so stern!" sobbed the little boy.

"Oh, Suresh!" cried Mrs. Chandra, drawing him into her arms. "Don't think that we are angry with you. We are looking this way because we are so worried about your brother." She turned to her husband and said, "Let's report it to the police, Tarun."

"Let's find out whether he's with any of his friends. Maybe he hasn't really run away. Maybe he just wants to frighten us into doing what he wants."

"But what does he want, Tarun? He hasn't told us."

"Mama," cut in Suresh, "I think *Bhaiya* wants to be a writer of comics."

"A WHAT?" asked his parents together disbelievingly.

"Don't be silly, Suresh," said Dr. Chandra dismissively. "Just because Rajesh draws a few caricatures, it doesn't mean that he can become a cartoonist."

"Why not?" asked Suresh innocently.

"Because," began his father with a lot of conviction, "because..." He stopped. Because of what? He looked at his wife. Both of them thought the same thing. Had they been guilty of squashing Rajesh's aspirations? Did he really want to be a cartoonist? Why, both of them had taken it for granted that he—and for that matter, even Suresh eventually—would follow in their footsteps. There was a long tradition of medicine in the family, starting with Rajesh's great-grandfather. Had Rajesh found the burden too much to bear? Was the path they expected him to tread just not the one he wanted to tread?

Yes, he had tried to say something a few months ago,

Mrs. Chandra now recalled. A friend of theirs in the publishing line had come from Delhi and Rajesh had asked him all kinds of questions until she had made a sign to him to stop pestering their guest. Those questions had seemed so irrelevant at that time, but now she wished that she could recall them. They might give her a clue to Rajesh's whereabouts.

"Phone Karan," she urged her husband. "Rajesh may have tried to get in touch with him. He may even be on his way there now."

Dr. Chandra went to the phone with a heavy heart. It was already 9 o'clock and so confused and broken were they, that they had not even begun to look for Rajesh. He got through to Karan, their publisher friend, and told him that if Rajesh contacted him, he should take a return address from him and call them immediately.

Rajesh's friends, to check if any one of them knew of his whereabouts. It was 11 p.m. when at last, he drew to a dead end. "We'll have to file a police report," he sighed. Mrs. Chandra stopped her pacing and lifted her head.

"I heard the gate," she said. She ran to the window and peeped out. "It's, it's...Oh, my God! Tarun! It's Rajesh! With the police!" She sped to the door and threw it open. She was half-way down the gravel path before her husband could get up from his seat by the phone.

"Raju, we were so worried!" she cried. "What happened?"

Rajesh allowed himself to be held by his mother while one of the constables with him handed over his bag quietly to his father. "We found him purely by accident in an unsavoury lodge in the old city. There was a drunken brawl and we intervened. He was

confessed that he had run away from home, so we brought him back. Don't let this happen again." The last sentence was for Rajesh, and he nodded shame-facedly.

He was so relieved to be in familiar surroundings again, so happy to be home. He didn't even mind the dozens of questions his mother was throwing at him and the way she would not let go of him.

Suresh heard the commotion and came running down the stairs. "*Bhaiya*!" he cried ecstatically and launched himself onto Rajesh's shoulder.

"Brat!" smiled Rajesh, pulling him down and ruffling his hair.

Suresh looked from his brother to his father and asked innocently, "Will you be a comic book writer or not, *Bhaiya*?"

Rajesh shrugged and his father replied, "It all depends on how committed you are to



Then, one by one, Dr. Chandra began to call up

not involved in anything, but he seemed to be in hiding. He

what you want, Rajesh. Your plans may change in a few

years, or they may remain the same. We can talk them through, can't we?"

Tears came to Rajesh's eyes and he nodded, unable to speak. Why had he imagined that Papa only thought of him as an examination machine? Here was Papa holding him and saying, quite uncharacteristically, "I love you, son." Then he added, "Just remember that there's no problem we can't tackle by talking about it together," and Mama said, "Have faith in us, Raju. We have faith in you, not merely expectations, but faith. There is a difference."

The room suddenly seemed bright and the thought of the exams did not produce the same dread he always felt. There was still so much for Rajesh to say, and so much for his parents to say too, he guessed.

In time, it would all be said. Rajesh realised that that was what he had been longing for.

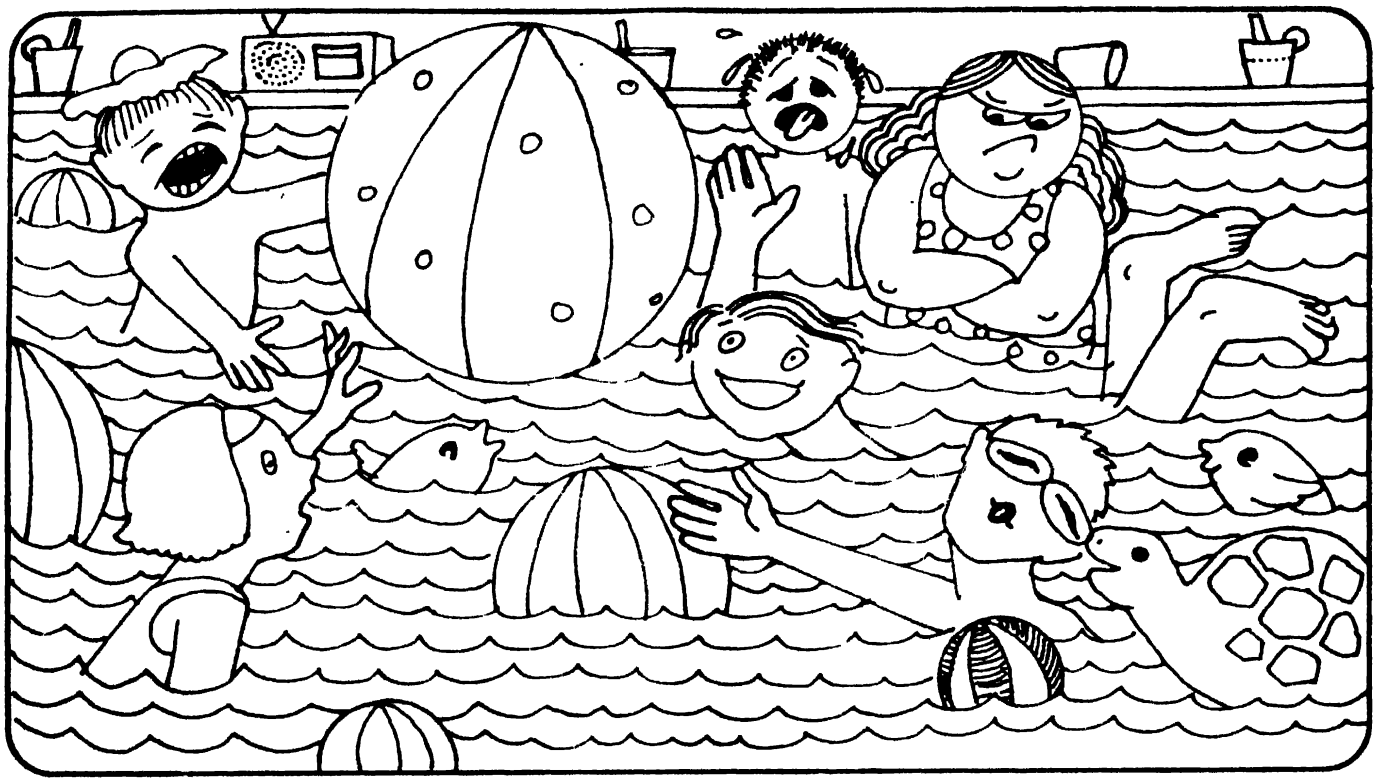
Prisoner

Merin Elizabeth Kuruvilla (12)
Illustrations: N[illegible]ar Chowdhury

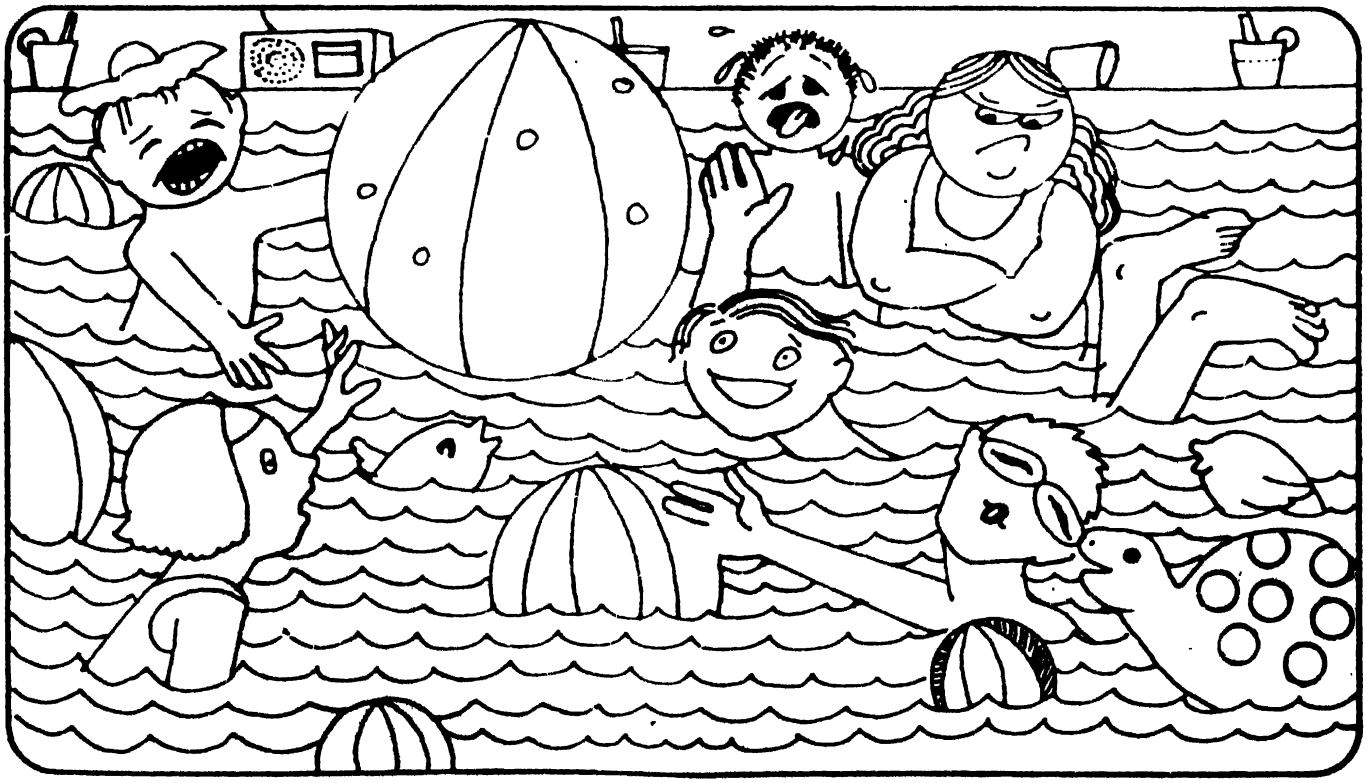
I perceive no other [illegible]
Beyond the four [illegible]
Binding me to this enclos[illegible]
I have lost all con[illegible]
With the vital wo[illegible]
Through a c[illegible]
Revealin[illegible]
A[illegible]
I c[illegible]

[illegible]ery,
[illegible] the granite
[illegible]e rampant walls.
Waiting for the second
The doors fly open in reality,
And I exit—unrestricted,
To breathe the scent of a fresh earth,
To feel the grass crunch beneath my feet,
To be an animated part of it.

PUZZLE PAGE

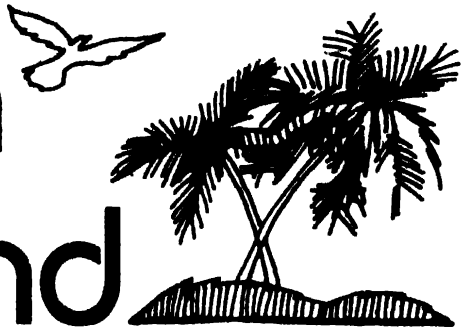


Spot ten differences



READER'S CHOICE

No Man is an Island





By Reader of the month: Dipavali Debroy

"TAKE the case of a Robinson Crusoe economy," said the Professor of Economics, addressing us sleepy-heads. I sat up. What did that children's classic have to do with Economics?

I soon found out.

The phrase 'Robinson Crusoe economy' refers to a country where there is just one person. He is the producer as well as the consumer, the employee as well as the employer. It is an extreme situation, of course. But I found it was often used in books on Economics as an example or model to simplify complicated cases where countries have vast populations divided into sets of producers and consumers. This made me take up the book *Robinson Crusoe* again. Once a favourite, it had been gathering dust for the past few years. I read it and I read in it more than I had read before.

This book, published in the early 18th century, is one of the first adventure stories to be written. It is, of course, not all fiction. It is based upon the experiences of Alexander Selkirk, a Scot youth, shipwrecked upon an uninhabited island off the coast of Chile. He survived on the supplies of the ship and lived alone on the island for several years. It was Alexander Selkirk whom Daniel Defoe developed into his Robinson Crusoe.

More than three centuries separate the youth of today from Robinson Crusoe who was born in 1632 in the city of York in England. But I found he had the same longings as many of us did.

"...my head began to be filled very early with rambling thoughts...I would be satisfied with nothing else but going to sea."

Like most parents, his parents were dead against it. Robinson Crusoe's father called him "one morning into his chamber ...and expostulated very warmly with me upon the subject...he pressed me earnestly, and in the most affectionate manner, not to play the young man, not to precipitate myself into miseries which nature and the station of life I was born in, seemed to have provided against."

But the effect of his father's 'discourse' wore off soon and Robinson Crusoe did what many an eighteen-year-old would do today. One day, when he found his mother in a good mood, he asked her to speak to and take up the case with his father.

His mother reacted in the way most mothers would. "This put my mother into a great passion. She told me that she knew it would be no purpose to speak to my father about the subject. He knew too well what was my interest to give his consent to anything so much for my hurt. She won-

dered how I could think of any such thing after such a discourse as I had had from my father, and such kind and tender expressions as she knew my father had used to me. She said that, in short, if I would ruin myself, there was no help for me, but I might depend I should never have their consent to it. For her part she would not have so much hand in my destruction, and I should never have it to say that my mother was willing when my father was not."

Robinson's mother followed it up with something else that many mothers would still do. "Though my mother refused to ask my father's permission, yet, as I heard afterwards, she reported all the discourse to him."

Within the year, Robinson Crusoe had broken loose.

It was after 35 years that he again set foot on the shores of home. "When I came to England, I was as perfect a stranger as if I had never been known there." His parents and his brothers were dead and, as he had been given up for dead, no provisions had been made for him. He put his affairs into some sort of an order. Then he began to take care of one of his deceased brother's children. He gave a settlement to one of them, but sent the other to sea. As for himself, he married and had two sons and one daughter. In other words, he built up a family around him—the family he had broken loose from.

Why? What had happened in those 35 years?

The world knows, and has known for several generations now, that in those years Robinson Crusoe had gone through a unique series of adventures. Shipwrecked on what he first called the Island of Despair, he sustained himself through his courage and resourcefulness. He survived terrible earthquakes and violent rain, fever and fits and attacks by savages. He salvaged some of the wreckage, and also made good use of whatever raw material nature had provided for on that island. He built his own tools, his own rough dwelling, grew his own barley and rice, baked his own clay-pots, dried grapes into raisins, manufactured his own clothes, his goat-skin cap and umbrella, and his own boat and sail. In fact, Robinson Crusoe had managed quite well by himself and had solved most of his problems.

But one problem had remained. His loneliness, his solitude, his utter isolation.

No amount of ingenuity or fortitude could have solved that. Only a human being—another human being—could have done so for him.

That happened to be a "savage", brought to the island by other savages—to be eaten! Robinson Crusoe saved his life, gave him a name (Man Friday), and taught him the basics of (European) civilization. It was not charity or assistance. Man Friday gave Robinson Crusoe something in exchange—something terribly important—the society of a fellow human being.

Robinson Crusoe himself said how he welcomed Man Friday's company. When Man Friday first spoke to him, he could not understand a word. "...yet I thought they were pleasant to hear, for they were the first sounds of a man's voice that I had heard, my own excepted, for more than five-and-twenty years." He tried "to teach him everything that was proper and useful, and especially to make him speak, and understand me when I spoke. ...And now my life began to be very easy and happy."

Earlier, he had even succeeded in baking his own barley bread. But man does not live by bread alone, and it required a Man Friday to make Robinson Crusoe "happy".

This is one of the main points that this adventure classic makes. As a young man, Robinson Crusoe had not attached much importance to the family, the society and the nation—the fabric that human beings have woven around

themselves.

In the long years on the island, he learnt how crucial they were.

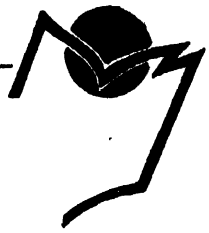
That is why in the end Robinson Crusoe got away from his island. He went back to his own country. He was all for the family. His prospects in England were not certain, and the island was not such an awful place any longer. But he chose not to be monarch of all he surveyed.

Our professor, too, soon asked us to drop the example of a Robinson Crusoe economy and pass on to real-life cases of countries with their due share of people and complications. The term Robinson Crusoe economy does get used in Economics, but only to describe extreme and artificial cases. For, once in a while, a country—like China or Russia—does get isolated from the rest of the world and finds itself behind a wall or a curtain. It is always glad to get back to its 'family' later on and open itself up to other countries.

Daniel Defoe's book made me see this as no book on Economics could have.

I realised the truth of what Lora B. Peck had written in 1925: "One element of value in this book has often been overlooked. With the greatly increased emphasis on the social studies has come a problem of making our students understand the tremendous significance in their daily lives of the interdependence of occupations, social groups, geographical regions, and, perhaps, most important of all, of the nations of the earth. Robinson Crusoe shows in striking contrast a purely independent, individual life, wresting a rudimentary and laborious existence from a somewhat kindly natural environment. The alert teacher of Social Studies will frequently use this background as an illuminating contrast with the conditions and problems she wishes to present."

Do you feel the same way when you read *Robinson Crusoe*, some of you for the first time and some for the umpteenth?



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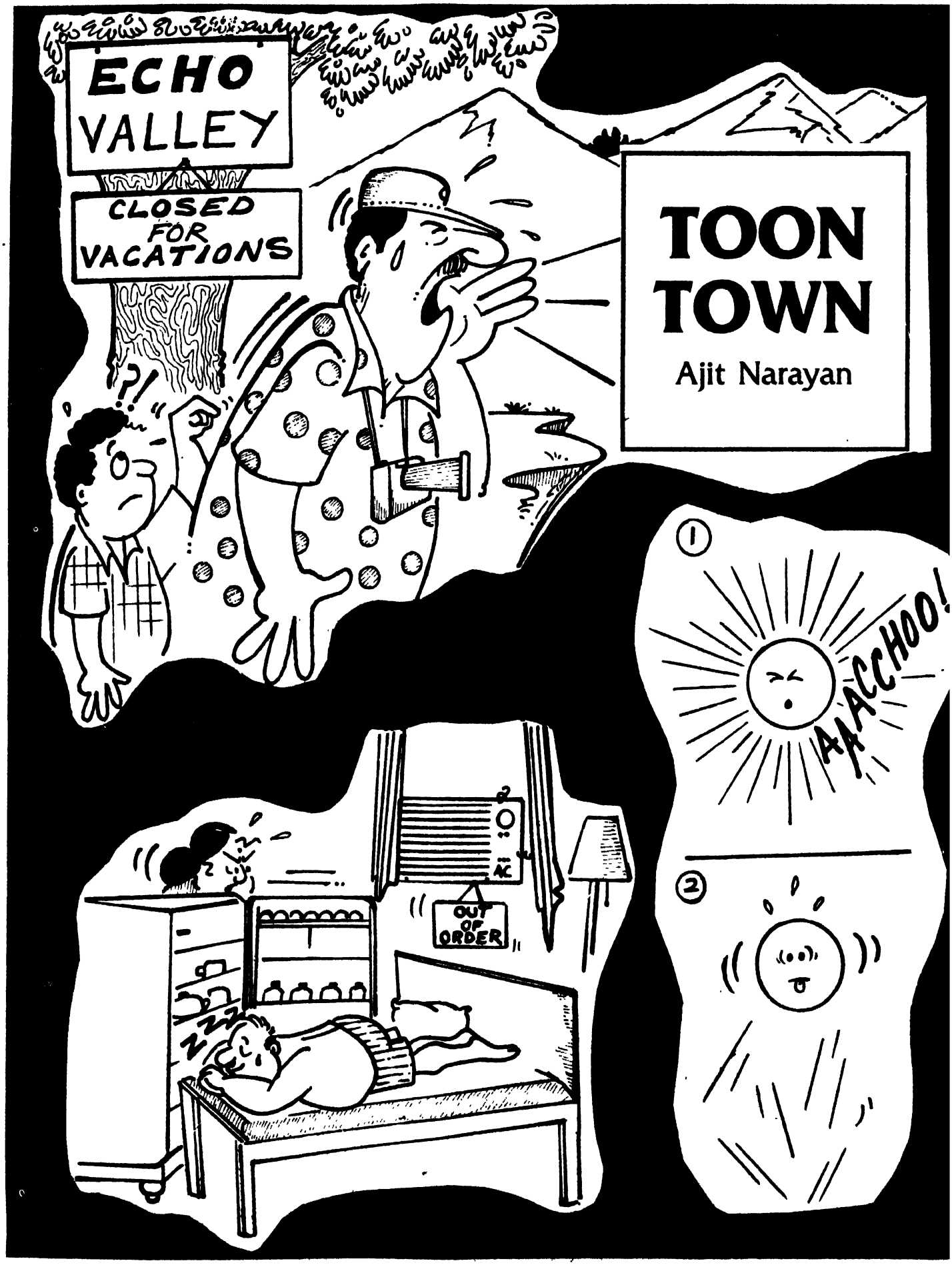
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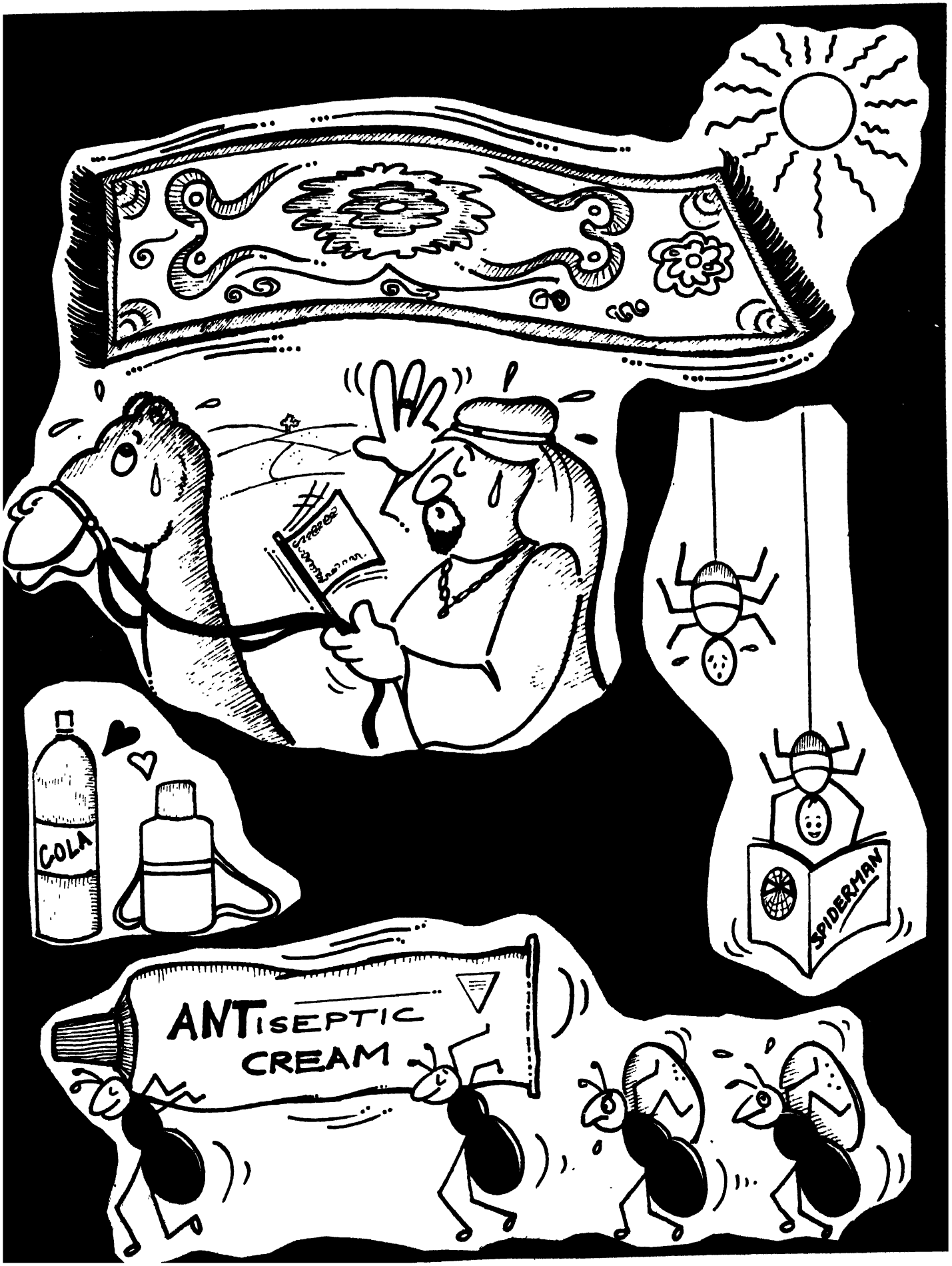
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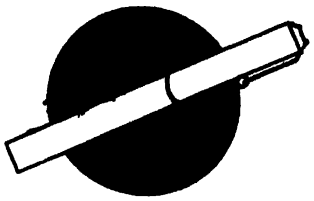
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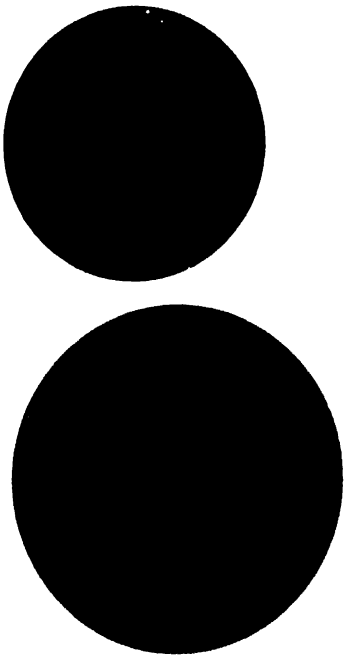
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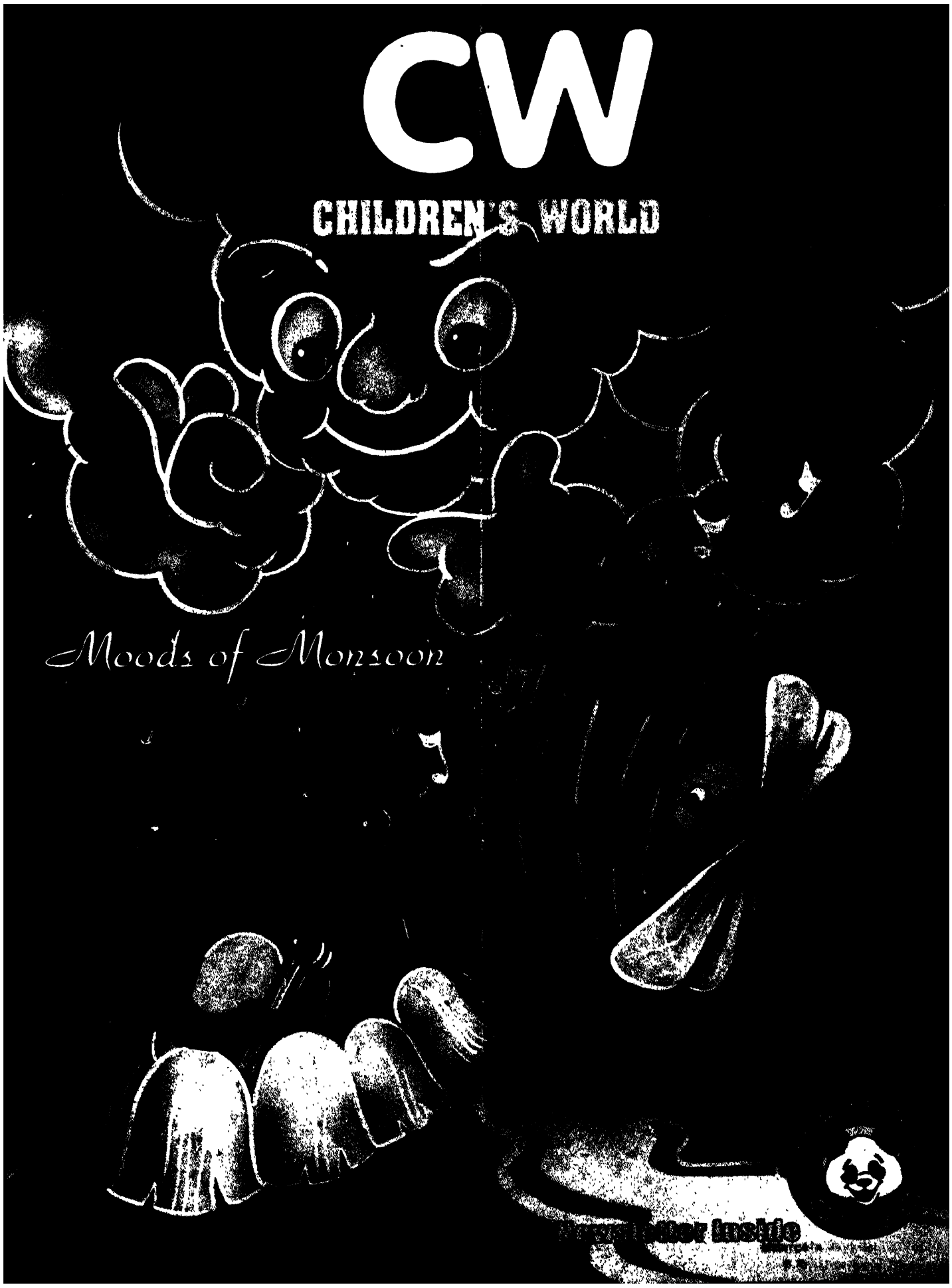
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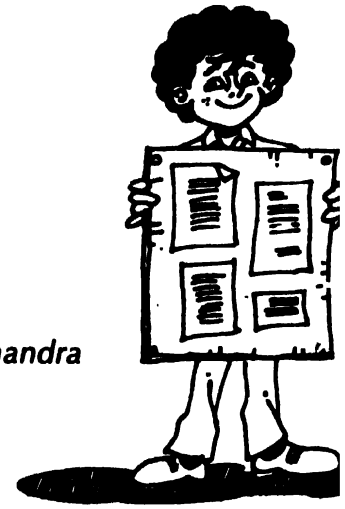
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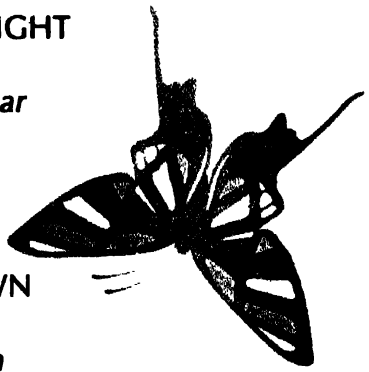
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Cover design: Viky Arya

© Children's World 1997

Dear Readers,

"If I were Rapunzel," says the Thai lady, "I would let down my long plaits from this window, and Prince Charming would climb up." We are in a castle, a 'schloss', in Germany. I watch a little girl bend over the water, and in my mind she gets transformed into a princess, bending over to kiss the frog who will turn into a handsome prince! Here in Schloss Bluntenburg, an exhibition of 'Old and new editions of the fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm' is ongoing for over two months. With delight we watch school-parties visiting the narrow Wehngang Gallery, crowding it with their merry chatter, as a teacher or student reads out a Grimm's fairy tale, after which the children draw and colour their own concepts of the story.

That is not all there is to Schloss Bluntenberg, however. Like all castles it has a treasure 'buried' deep in its cellar. This treasure is a collection of about 460,000 children's books in over 100 languages. Books, books, books, as far as the eye can see.

The library will celebrate its golden jubilee next year and deserves global congratulations. In its fifty years of existence, its staff has meticulously collected books meant for children, and put them at the disposal of those like me who come here to do research projects on various aspects of children's literature. For children there is a separate 'junior' library in another wing of the castle.

In yet another section, from time to time, an old-fashioned screen is unfurled and a delighted audience of small children proceed to see a film.

Castles and treasures, fairies and princes, take one back to India, where in July, monsoon clouds gather and the frogs begin their choir. This year, seek them out and say 'hello'—you never know which one will turn out to be a prince or princess. And if it is raining too heavily to go out—pull out your fairy tales and re-read them. There is a 'treasure' hidden in them...like in CW. Seek it...

Happy reading and raining

·Editor

Dear Editor,
I have been a regular reader of CW. I greatly appreciate your poems which are an inspiration to budding poets. Poems really are the best way to express one's feelings, and both reading and composing them give a lot of pleasure. Please publish an article on 'How to develop your composing skills'.

Sukomal Goel, Tinsukia

Dear Editor,
I think CW is the best thing happening to children of India right now. I would like to congratulate Dipavali Debroy, Thangamani and Paro Anand for creating such good and original stories. As also Merin Elizabeth Kurivilla for such beautiful and touching poems.

Kanupriya Arora, New Delhi

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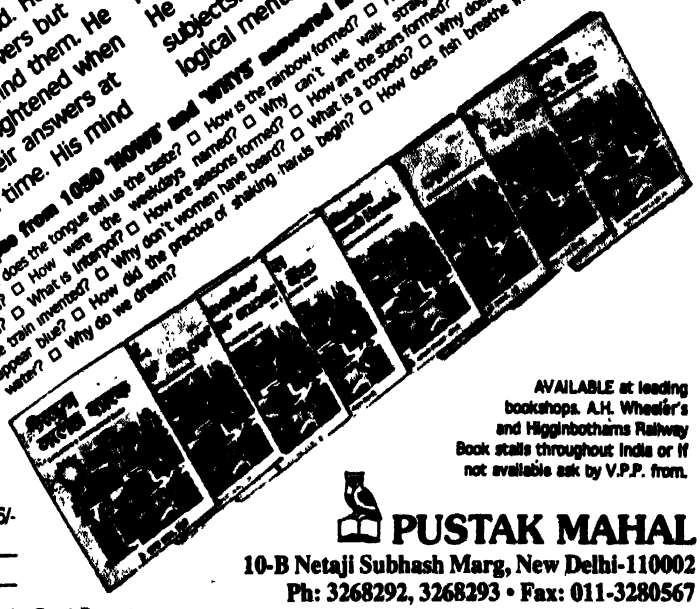
The moment a child starts thinking, his curiosity is aroused. He starts wondering about the beautiful world around him. Many 'Hows' and 'Whys' crop up in his mind. He seeks their answers but cannot easily find them. He becomes enlightened when he gets their answers at the right time. His mind becomes sharper and developes superior perception. And this leads him towards better intelligence.

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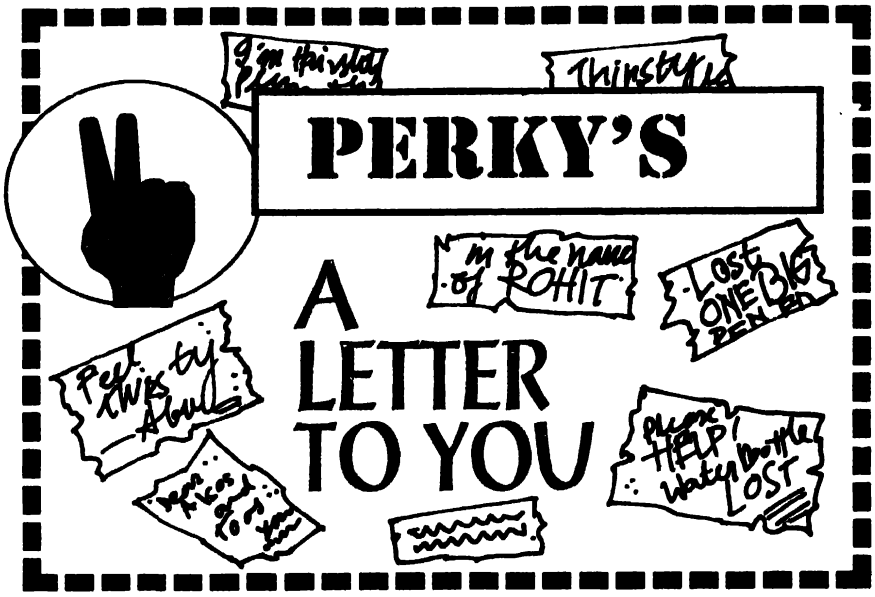
Dear alsos and toos,

You remember my getting a brilliant idea last time and making up a set of rules to remove Raghu from the scheme of things? If I remember right, I called them Directions to the Land of Raghulessness—the paths to take when you want to go where Raghu does not exist, that place of bliss.

Well, guess what happened or have I already told you? Raghu made up a set of rules too. No, he didn't do it for Raghulessness. He made up rules for Perkylessness—can you believe it? For Perkylessness? What cheek! What absolute cheek! What absolute double-faced cheek!

I know. I know what you are saying. You are saying why shouldn't Raghu get the same idea? After all, if you (that is I) can do it so can he (that is Raghu). But, listen, there is an important difference. A very important difference.

Tell me, where did I make up the rules? Tell me. In my room, right? I sat in my house, in my room, at my desk and with my pen wrote in my diary. All very quiet and private. But do you know what Raghu did? He put up the rules on the notice-board on the school notice-board. How do you like that? All his rules for removing me, Perky, were put there for everybody to see. And to laugh over.



What do you mean the school notice-board, I hear you ask. Isn't that where principals and teachers and the office put up notices about exams and fees and all that? Right, that's what notice-boards are for. In fact, they are meant only for that.

But Mr. Krish got this brilliant idea (too many of these nowadays) that students should be allowed to use the notice-board too. "So that all your lost property can be found," he said. "I am tired of all of you coming and disturbing the office and looking for tiffin boxes and pens and erasers and water bottles. From now on, please use the notice-board to put up messages about anything you've found or have lost."

"Can we put other messages also, Sir?" Raghu asked meekly. Little did I know then, what the monster had in mind.

"Put up whatever you like," said Mr. Krish irritably. I find Mr. Krish always gets irritable when Raghu asks him something. "Just make sure that it is not cluttered with notices that are centuries old. There should be no message that is more than a week old."

And Mr. Krish gave a final look at Raghu and left.

I must say something about Raghu—he's clever. Really

clever. Even I have to admit that. In fact, he is so clever that for three whole days after Mr. Krish gave us our own 'Students' Notice-board' Raghu did not do anything. He did not even put up a LOST notice, And Raghu is good at losing things, as you know. He loses at least three hundred things everyday. He also finds them and it's usually his own fault for losing them in the first place. He says it's because he is a genius; according to him people who are geniuses always lose things.

Well, I am a genius too but I never lose things.

Anyway, for the first three days, the 'Students' Notice-board' only had things like

LOST
ONE BIG PEN ERASER
and
NAME Of ROHIT.

PLEASE HELP
WATER BOTTLE (BLUE)
LOST. FEEL THIRSTY
—Abu

Naturally, half of us went around looking for an eraser



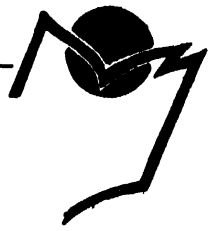
called Rohit. "Come, come, come here, Rohit, come, Rohit eraser!" we'd call all around the grounds. The other half went around fainting whenever they could, clutching their throats and gagging and gasping, "I'm thirsty. Please help. I'm thirsty."

Naturally, the eraser called Rohit and the unfortunate blue water bottle were never found.

But this is nothing to what happened later and which led to a really really big fight between Raghu and me—a WAR in fact.

But that will have to wait tell next time.

Yours noticefully,
Perky



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VIRASAT

A Look At Indian Culture

A report byAbhijit Chandra Chandra

"*GURUJI ne bola hai,*" a rustic says firmly in Chattisgarhi... A conversation in a village in northern India's interior, perhaps? No, this is New Delhi. 'Charan Das Chor', a play by theatre personality Habib Tanveer is being staged at the Modern School, Barakhamba Road. This is part of the SPICMACAY's (Society for the Promotion of Indian Classical Music And Culture Amongst Youth) Fifth Annual School Convention held this May. Founded in 1977, this voluntary organisation aims at exposing young minds to Indian culture and inspiring them in that direction.

The play, with actors hailing from rural areas, centres around thief Charan Das. A holy man saves him from a constable and asks him to fulfil certain conditions. Though he commits other wrongs, Charan Das sticks to his guru's words even at the risk of being beheaded.

Among the many students who witnessed the play was Kanishk Bhargav of Delhi Public School, NOIDA. Incidentally, the young lad is also a member of SPICMACAY. What does Kanishk feel about the play? "I remember having read the work before...really wonderful to see it on stage." Said another student, "Since the actors were from a rural background, it was interesting to see the way they spoke and behaved."



Pandit Birju Maharaj

The troupe had arrived with bags stuffed with hay to be used in the play. Undoubtedly, the drama drew attention. Nissar Ahmed Khan, who has been a peon at the Modern School for the last twenty years, doesn't recall witnessing such a performance before. While patrolling outside, he took some time off to peek into the auditorium. "I liked it very much," grins Khan.

The two-day convention had some very notable personages interacting with the children. The names included Pandit Birju Maharaj, Kathak, and Uday Bhawalkar who gave a rendering of Dhrupad. Birju Maharaj's programme was in the form of a lecture-demonstration, his rhythmic steps interspersed with explanations. The Pandit was open to queries from the audience.

"He explained what has been in the past and how it is

SPIC MACAY

Dr. Kiran Seth, founder of SPICMACAY, sits on the floor in the audio-visual room of the Modern School three days after the convention. White-haired and informally clad, he has been addressing members who have gathered there. Amidst debates, cross-talk and a constantly moving audience, an interview begins.

Q. Would you say a few words about yourself?

A. I've been teaching Operations Research at the Indian Institute of Technology, New Delhi, since 1976. Prior to that I was teaching and researching in the United States. I studied at I.I.T., Kharagpur. *Aami Bangla bujhte pari, likhte pari.* (He grins.)

Q. Tell us more about SPICMACAY.

A. SPICMACAY was founded in 1977, but the idea germinated before that. In 1972, when I was studying in Columbia University, we had a programme by Ustad Ali Akbar Khan. Our group wasn't known as SPICMACAY then; we called it the Indian Club of Columbia University. We don't promote anyone, we're trying to take up already promoted things. A lay person may come to the auditorium hearing the name of the artist. He sees the programme and might get [illegible]. That's the main aim. Among our lesser [illegible] is to promote talented young people.

Q. The programmes held in the various schools and colleges recently were aimed at exposing students to the diversity of Indian culture, weren't they?

A. More than exposing it is to provide an interaction. We're not trying to turn a potential doctor into a musician; we're trying to make him a better doctor or a potential engineer into a better engineer... We have only scratched the surface, the actual feel of our heritage, the understanding, takes a lot of time.

Q. It's very heartening to find a person from the field of science taking an interest in art and culture...

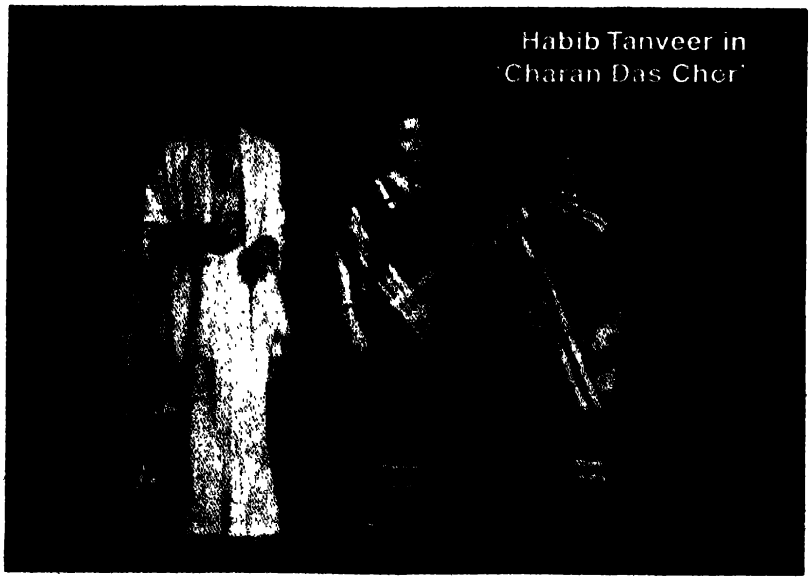
A. Art and culture should not be discipline-dependant. They are capable of enriching every human being.

Q. Among the several artists who performed, was there any person whose work really touched you?

A. *('Jo jaane aadmi ko aada'* hums Dr. Seth.) Pandit Bhimsen Joshi sang that; it was wonderful. They are greats, becoming lesser in [illegible]; they affected me greatly. I was also

now," says Richa Bajaj, a class ten student, who regrets that nowadays "it has become a status symbol to discuss pop stars". Was it difficult to understand the maestro? "When the artistes explain things, it becomes very simple," feels Richa. "It wasn't complex," states Kriti, adding, "Birju Maharaj will be conducting a Kathak work shop. People present were eager to join."

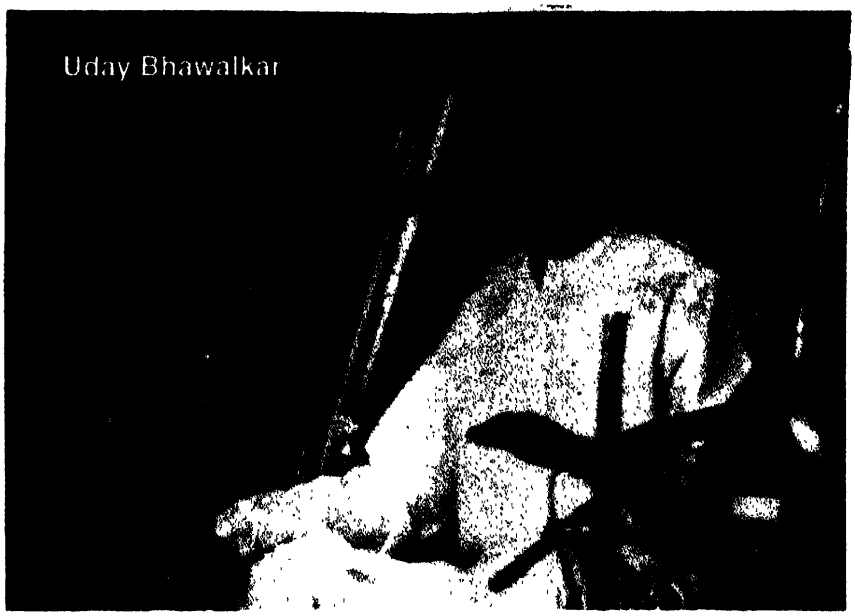
On the evening of the first day was a programme on Punjabi folk by the Wadali brothers. It was a light session having a significant 'fun' element, sprinkled with jokes and foot-tapping numbers such as *'Duma dum mast kalandar'*.


Habib Tanveer in 'Charan Das Chor'

The same could hardly be said of Uday Bhawalkar's programme the next morning.

Neha Mittroo, a 'Modernite', who

was attracted to the classical side during the convention felt, "Dhrupad is very complex and intensive." Sonali's plaint was , "Most of us didn't really understand it."



The concluding programme was Satish Chandra Mahato's Purulia Chhau. Dressed in colourful costumes and masks, the Bengalee troupe re-enacted the killing of Mahish-asura by Goddess Durga. As Durga's weapon pierces the demon's body, Ganesh, Kartik, Lakshmi and Saraswati take their place beside her.

Students' sessions were on schedule on both days, where youngsters were allowed to put forward views. There were the usual "arguments and debates", says student Pragya Joshi. Since most of them seemed to have a cul-

moved by Dagar.

Q. You are an ex-student of Modern School. How does it feel to be walking along the corridors of your alma mater?

A. It feels wonderful. The school has given me a lot. I have learnt a lot. I am giving back a small part. I have a love for young persons.

Q. Tell us something about SPICMACAY's journal, 'The eye'?

A. Often a venture is triggered off with some young people saying something. Safina Oberoi, who was a student of Delhi University seven to eight years back, asked me then, "You're doing so much for art and culture, why not something for literature?" She started a small four-page journal called 'Ananya'. After her graduation it lay dormant for a couple of years till the present editor, Nirmal Sekhar, put it on a firm footing. It's a green word movement and many of the issues are thematically arranged.

Q. What about your family?

A. [illegible] I have been [illegible] for a long time in Bombay. [illegible] I have a nephew and [illegible] I have not had a direct effect on my nephews and nieces, since they don't [illegible] my immediate family. Some do [illegible], some don't.

Q. What have been the reactions to your work?

A. In Bangalore, a lady came up to me and said, "I want to thank you. Though I still don't know what's going on, I feel you're doing something special. I have two children—one is learning classical music, the other classical dance." There is a cascade effect on later generations. This particular convention was very fine, many [illegible] participated.

Q. Is there anything you'd like to add?

A. SPICMACAY is trying [illegible] elements—a certain degree of [illegible], some amount of [illegible] and [illegible] the young [illegible] and [illegible] the [illegible] immediate.



tural bent of mind, they agreed to disagree. A Principals'session was arranged too.

"The response (to the arts and crafts workshop and exhibition) was very good," reveals class ten student Sonali, of Modern School. Kanishk Bhargav feels, "The best thing is that it (SPICMACAY membership) is voluntary, there's no coercion." He was present at the society's previous annual convention at Chennai.

SPICMACAY programmes were held at 26 schools and four colleges all over the capital as part of the 'Virasat' series. At the Colonel Satsangi's Kiran Memorial School, Chattarpur, performances included Ram Kailas's 'Birah Geet' and Gurmeet Bawa's Punjabi folk. Says Principal, Dr. Shakuntala S. Jaiman, "It was very well-received by the students. This is the first time we have participated and we intend to do so again."

But aren't some of these programmes too complex and don't they go over the heads of schoolchildren? Dr. Jaiman, who is also a psychologist, disagrees, "Unless and until you expose them, how will you get them acquainted?

"Conditioning plays a role in development of children," she adds. "A child from a house of scholars is more likely to become an intellectual. We are trying to get children interested aesthetically."

Going by the students' reactions and other comments, the programmes certainly make young minds aware of and interested in the myriad world of Indian culture. *Viva* SPICMACAY!

Children's World Award





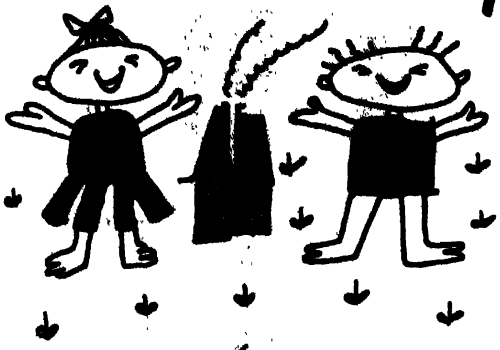
Divya Nambiar won the Children's World Award for her painting, 'Sports Day', at the Shankar's On-the-Spot Painting Competition held in November 1996.

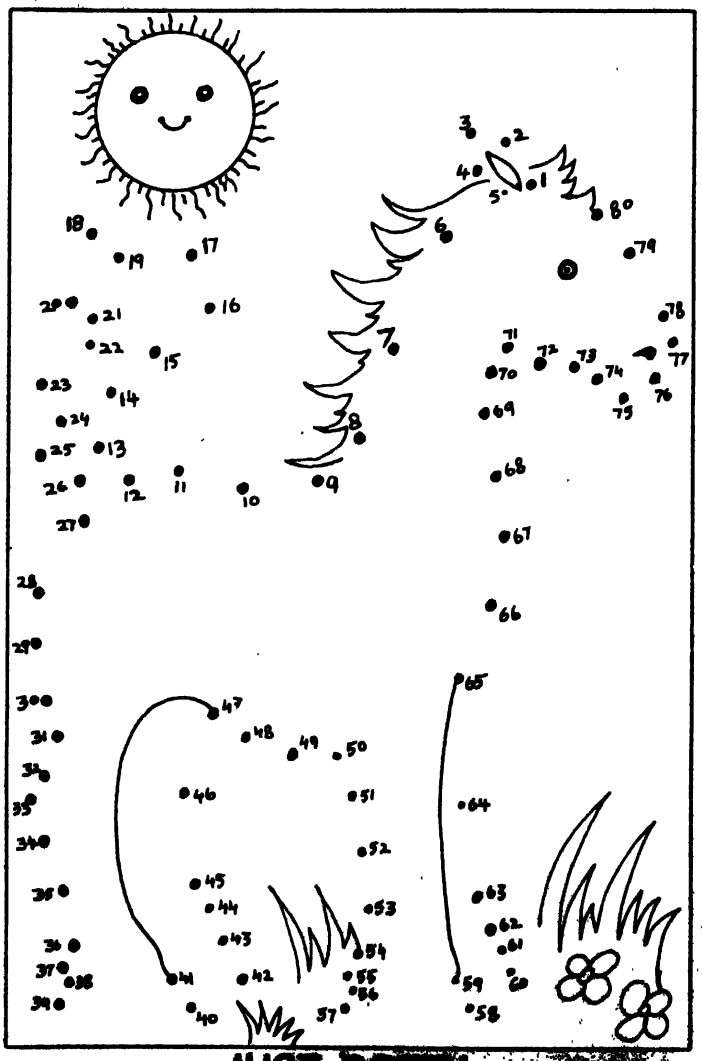
Thirteen-year-old Divya is a student of Holy Child Auxiliam School. She is a Government of India's Talent Search Scholarship holder for ten years, beginning 1995. She created history in Nehru Bal Samiti in 1996 by securing Gold Medals on all 15 days of their On-the-Spot Painting Competition. The Samiti honoured her with the Kalashree Award for 1995 and 1996.

Divya's laurels include the Best Award,1997, and the First Prize, 1996, from Delhi Government's Urdu Academy, and First Prizes from the National Gallery of Modern Art, the National Rail Museum, *Nandan, The Hindu Young World, The Times of India* and Camlin among others.

FOOTFUN

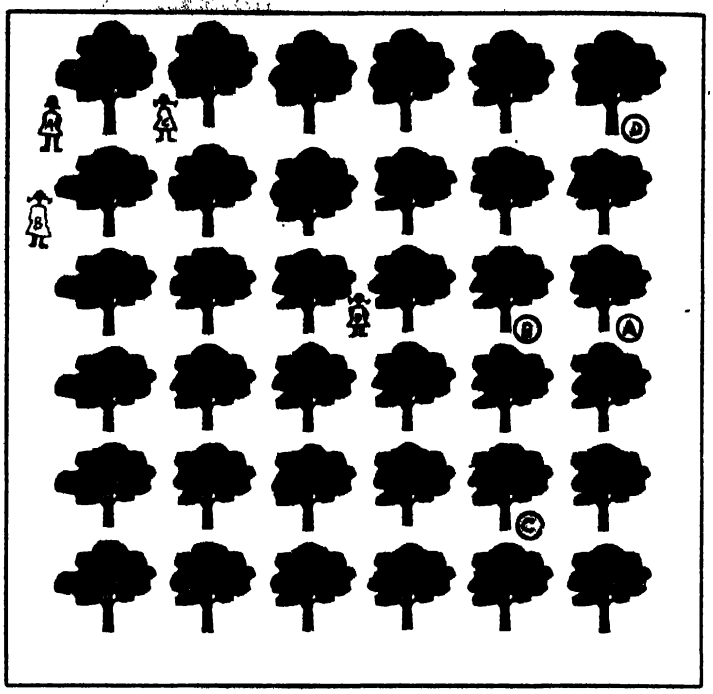
A good laugh
is sunshine
in a house.
W.M.Thackeray

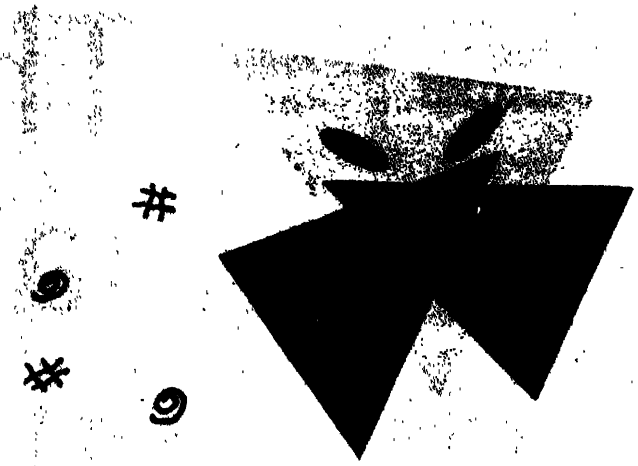




JUST DOTTY

Join the dots and discover a hidden picture and colour it.





JUNGLE MAZE

Arati (A), Bina (B), Charu (C) and Deepa (D) have lost their balls—A, B, C, and D respectively—in the jungle and have begun searching for them. Can you help them? They shouldn't meet each other nor should their paths cross.

MOODS OF MONSOON

Look out for signs of the monsoon in the grid alongside. Hidden in it, horizontally, vertically, diagonally, backwards and forwards, are: CLOUDS, STORM, THUNDER, LIGHTNING, PUDDLES, FROGS, HUMIDITY, FLOODS, TADPOLES, GUMBOOTS, RAINCOAT, UMBRELLA, PAPER BOATS, EARTHWORMS and MONSOON itself. See if you can spot all the words.

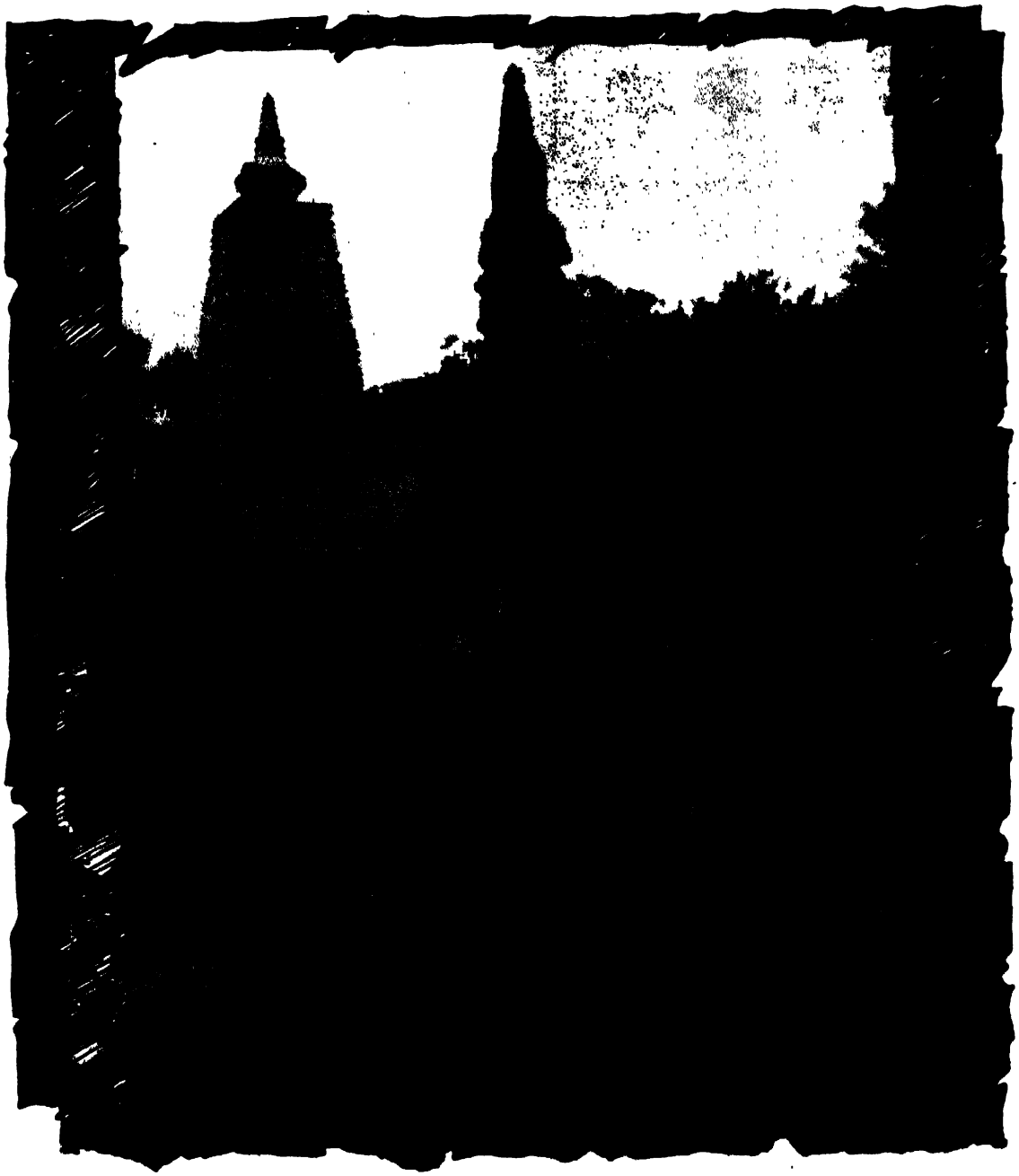
C O L U I P T H U M B R E L L A A S Y
H T I S T U M P P S P T F A R T I G D
P O G D E D S I N T A O C N I A R E F
U T H U N D E R G T P O P G H T U L H
S D T E A L E A C H E T J A M T O I U
M O N E Y E A T S M R O W H T R A E M
H O I S T S D E A D B U G S D N T H I
S O N I T U G H S T O R M S T H E S D
S U G S T O L L O U A B A L T I C S I
D H E Z O I O B U T T S E L O P D A T
O N T H R O T B C H S E E T H E S D Y
O I G H T I N E M O R N I H M F D C A
L I L F R O G S K U G H D S D U O L C
F I L H I T H G N B G T H S R E E S A



FOOTFUN
FROM LIBERTY

GOING PLACES

The Mahabodhi Temple



Text : Brinda Gill
Transparency : Satyajit Gill

IN THE heart of Bihar is Bodh Gaya, a town with the Mahabodhi Temple, the most revered shrine of Buddhists all over the world. It was here that, about 2500 years ago, the Buddha attained Enlightenment.

The temple rises high from below ground level to 180 feet. Built of bricks, it is shaped like a narrow pyramid rising from a solid rectangular base. Smaller replicas of the central structure stand at the four corners of the temple. The external temple walls are divided into horizontal panels at successive levels. The panels are ornamented with arched niches holding statues of the Buddha in a characteristic *mudra* (hand gesture). At the rear of the temple is a large, spreading Bodhi (*peepul*) tree believed to have grown from the original, in the shade of which Gautama Siddhartha attained Enlightenment.

It was around 566 B.C. that Gautama Siddhartha was born to the King of the Sakyas in present Nepal. As a child he was quiet and thoughtful. Though he lived in luxurious surroundings, within him he longed to know the truth of man's existence. At the age of 29 he left his wife and son in search of Truth and Peace. Advice from learned teachers and practice of painful austerities offered him no solution. He then meditated under a Bodhi tree. Here the answers were revealed to him: the world is full of suffering; suffering is caused by desire; the renunciation of desire is the path of salvation. He was now the Buddha or the Enlightened One. He travelled widely, spreading his message of Truth and Peace, providing solace to many people.

To mark the sacred spot of the Buddha's Enlightenment, Emperor Ashoka (272–232 B.C.) built a shrine to enclose the Bodhi tree. A stone railing with numerous carvings was added in the first century B.C. and a temple was built next to the tree by the Kushan dynasty (144–244 A.D.). Today in the vicinity of the temple are sites that recall the seven weeks the Buddha spent recapitulating his achievements after receiving Enlightenment.

These sites include: Animeshlockan Chaitya (Place of Unwinking Gazing) which marks the spot where the Buddha stood gazing at the tree in gratitude; Chankramamana (Jewel Walk) where he paced, pondering whether he should reveal the message he received to the world. His steps are marked by stone lotus flowers, representing flowers which miraculously blossomed under his feet. The original flowers are destroyed stumps which are juxtaposed with new, complete stone flowers. At Mulcinda tank, amidst lotus flowers, is a statue of the Buddha under the hood of the mighty serpent king, Mulcinda, who emerged from the water to protect the Buddha from a thunderstorm while he was meditating.

Since its inception the Mahabodhi Temple has witnessed 2000 years that have seen glory, additions to the structure as well as neglect. Around 450 A.D. waves of sand from the adjacent Phalgu river filled the Temple courtyard to a height of two and a half feet. Around 600 A.D., Raja Sasankha of Bengal, an opponent of Buddhism, ordered the Bodhi tree to be cut down and the statue of Buddha destroyed and replaced by God Mahasvara's. Unable to bring himself to destroy the statue, the King's officer built a brick wall before it and drew a fig-

Since its inception the Mahabodhi Temple has witnessed 2000 years that have seen glory, additions to the structure as well as neglect.

ure of God Mahasvara on the wall. Around 620 A.D. Raja Purna Varma 'revived the roots of the tree with the milk of 1000 cows, and in a single night it sprang up again to a height of 10 feet'. Thsang, the Chinese pilgrim (629–648 A.D.), remarked during his visit to the Temple, "...it is built of bluish bricks, faced with plaster. It presents several tiers of niches each of which holds a gilded statue of Buddha. On all four sides the walls are covered with beautiful sculptures, festoons of pearls..." The Burmese undertook extensive restoration of the entire temple between 1035 and 1078 A.D., followed by restoration by the Pala Kings in the 12th century.

With the Mohammedan invasions during the 13th century, Buddhist centres declined. The great Temple was largely deserted except for occasional pilgrims from Nepal and Burma with modest offerings; and a few Hindu pilgrims. Walls peeled off, bricks fell off in some places to a depth of nearly 5 feet! The approach to the shrine was blocked by accumulated debris and the monsoons turned the interior of the temple into a small tank. Six centuries of neglect past.

The arrival of a Burmese mission in 1802 for restoration work caught the interest of the British administrators. Intermittent attempts at restoration were made by the British from 1811, the last being archeological excavations by Major Meade in 1863 which exposed headless broken statues and hemispherical domes of the rows of stupas. A small stone model of the Temple found in the ruins from which 'the whole design of the building as it existed in medieval times, could be traced with tolerable completeness' assisted the restoration. Besides, a few relatively preserved portions of mouldings and niches enabled the restorers to complete the repairs in the exact pattern of the original.

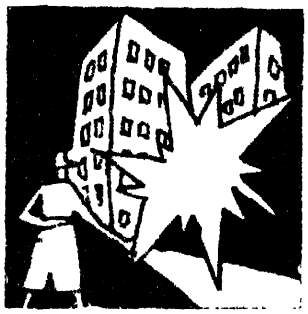


Under Sir Alexander Cunningham, the pieces were painstakingly put together with new material brought in to fill the missing portions. The niches are now filled with sculptures unearthed during the excavations and statues of Buddha, once slashed, pieced together. Despite the cracks, the Buddha is lifelike, long-eyed and calm.

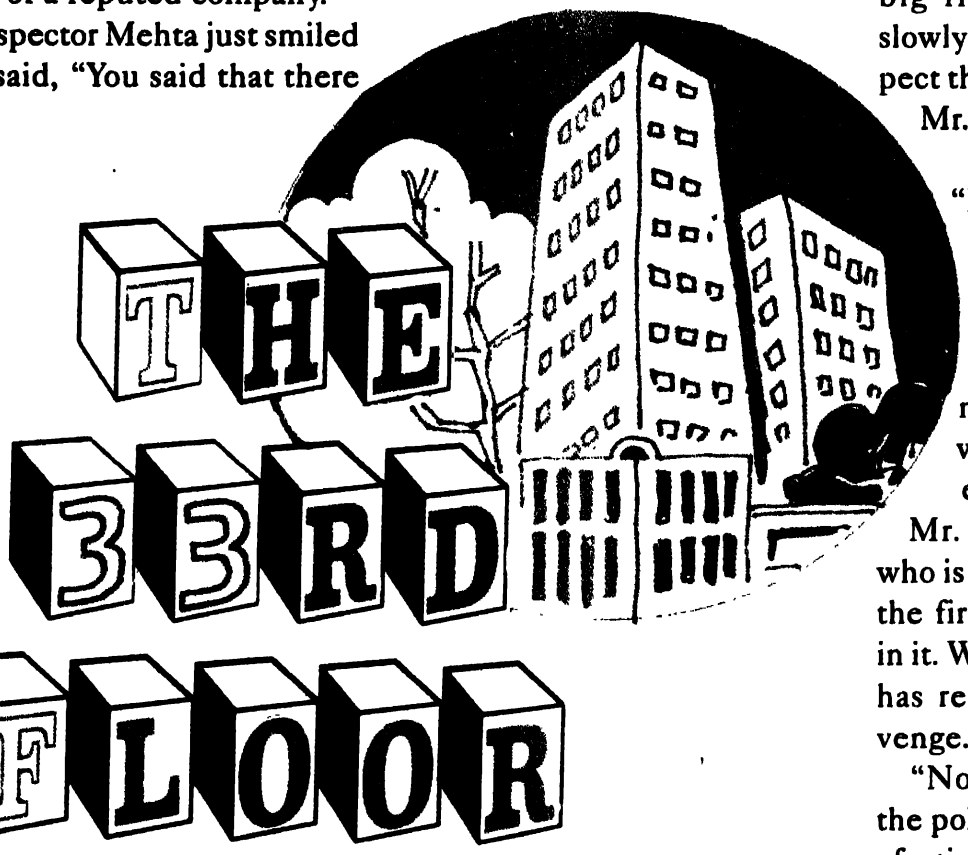
The temple within comprises of four parts: the shrine (*garbhagriha*), the vestibule (*antarala*), the hall (*mandapa*) and a porch. Within the shrine an image of Lord Buddha is installed on a raised pedestal made of black basalt stone. It is a gilded image of the Buddha in the Bhumisparsha Mudra or the earth touching posture in which He attained Enlightenment. The sanctum, recessed and dark, makes the Buddha stand out from the depths of the room—and time.

Today the Mahabodhi Temple is important for the Buddhist pilgrim as well as famous as a unique example of a developed form of Indian temple architecture. The Mahabodhi Temple also supplied the prototype of similar temples in Burma and Thailand; for replicating the monument was believed to be an act of merit, capable of transporting to the new site, some of the essence of the Buddha.

Story: Rahul Srinivasan
Illustrations: Pijush Dutta



THE 33RD FLOOR



"THANK YOU for coming in plain clothes, Inspector Mehta. It is for the sake of the company's reputation," said Mr. Vikram Gupta, Vice-President of a reputed company.

Inspector Mehta just smiled and said, "You said that there is something wrong with one of your floors. Could I know the details please?"

"Not any floor," corrected Mr. Gupta. "It is the 33rd floor. Since the third of this month—which is coincidentally the third month of this year—the trouble began." He stopped to wipe his brow. "As usual, all the officers left at 6 pm. However, next morning it was found that none of the personnel on that floor returned home! After that, two officers went to inspect the floor. They never returned. All attempts to reach the floor have proved futile."

Inspector Mehta looked up at the dreaded floor. "Did you try to reach it from outside?"

The Vice-President wiped his brow again. "Two of our finest peons climbed it from outside. Since the blinds are always drawn, they could not see a thing. So they broke the glass and entered. They came out almost immediately."

Inspector Mehta looked at him eagerly. "What did they say?"

"They couldn't. They fell or were made to fall from the windows. There was not a bone that was not fractured. They died almost instantly."

The police officer looked back as the sound of *shlokas* could be heard. He walked towards the source of the sound and saw priest praying and chanting *shlokas* around a big fire in which *ghee* was slowly being poured. "We suspect the hand of a ghost," said Mr. Gupta as he caught up with Inspector Mehta. "Exactly 33 years ago on the third of the very same month, this firm's joint owner, Mr. Maxwell—was murdered; his murderer was never caught. However it is rumoured that Mr. Sharma, his partner, who is currently taking care of the firm's affairs, had a hand in it. We fear that Mr. Maxwell has returned to take his revenge..."

"Nonsense!" interrupted the police officer. "In this age of rational thinking and a modern outlook, you still believe in ghosts?"

"Well, you cannot rule out this possibility."

"In my opinion, a gang of hoodlums is holding up the

place. Perhaps the police are after them and they're seeking refuge on the 33rd floor of your building. The rest might just be a coincidence."

The Inspector returned the next day. Mr. Gupta came to receive him with a troubled look. "Yesterday, I again sent two peons on your suggestion and told them to take photographs from the windows. One fell from there—or was made to fall—as in the case of the two previous peons. The second failed to return."

Soon, policemen wearing plain clothes arrived in large, white unmarked vans.

"Our police force" whispered Inspector Mehta to the Vice-President who strained to look at them in the dark. "After an hour, in the cover of darkness, they will attack. They have been trained to act under such conditions. With the element of surprise on our side, success is guaranteed," explained the police officer as Mr. Gupta listened attentively.

The Inspector donned his bulletproof suit after all the others had done so.

Soon all the elevators, staircases and fire exits were full of policemen—waiting for the signal. Inspector Mehta entered an elevator.

"Now!!!" His voice was loud and clear. The gates of the elevators shut and they shot up to the 33rd floor, while men on the 32nd floor moved on when his voice came through their walkie-talkies.

Mr. Gupta paced the floor, throwing an occasional glance at the clock. Suddenly, a blast was heard, followed by gun shots. Then, there was complete silence. Only the ticking of the clock and the sound of leaves rustling in the wind broke upon the Vice-President's ear as he slumped into a chair and dozed off.

And the next morning, the watchman brought the news of the previous night's proceedings, at which Mr. Gupta displayed no surprise.

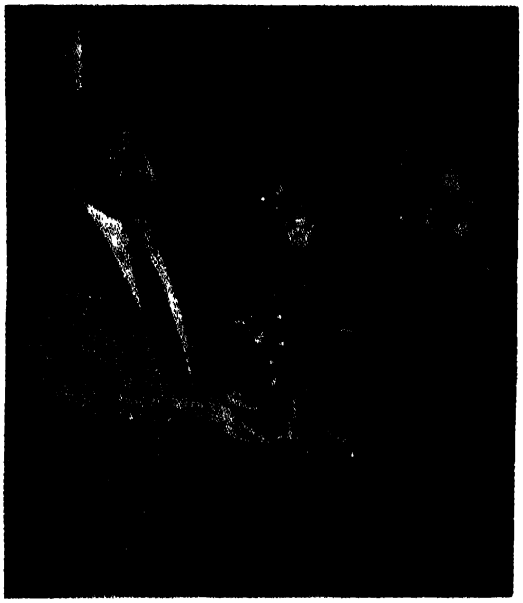


Dolls from Turkmenistan

A presentation of dolls from five districts of Turkmenistan was made to Shankar's International Dolls Museum on Saturday, May 31, 1997, by the Ambassador of Turkmenistan to India, H.E. Mr. Ashir Ataev, at a ceremony on the premises of the Dolls Museum.

Speaking on the occasion, H.E. Mr. Ashir Ataev said that the history of his people is reflected in the dolls. The occasion marks the beginning of the relationship between Turkmenistan and India, and will serve to strengthen mutual bonds, he added, promising to increase the contribution of dolls to the Museum. The Ambassador dwelt on the historical links between the two countries which dates back to over 1000 years. The Turkman gate and the forts of Tughlakabad and Hyderabad too tell this story. H.E. Mr. Ashir Ataev felt that besides paintings, handicrafts made by children should also be exchanged.



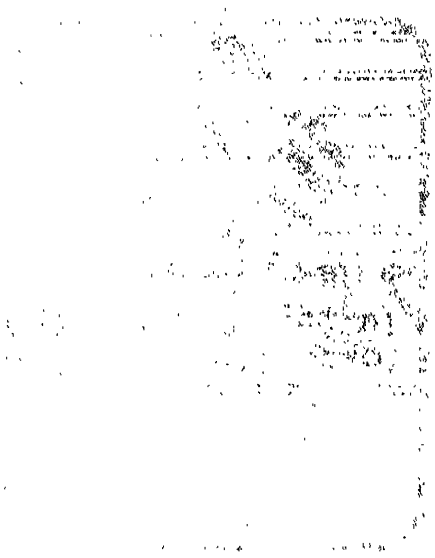


The exhibits, thirty in number, dressed in rich, colourful costumes of the country, don the ornate silver jewellery of the different regions of Turkmenistan. An added feature of this presentation is that all the dolls have been dressed by children.

The presentation ceremony was attended by the Ambassador of Ukraine, Representatives of Uzbekistan and Russia, the Counsellor and the Trade Commisioner of Kyrghyztan.

Answers to Bingo! (May 1997)

1. Samuel Hahnemann 2. Frankenstein 3. Canada and America in 1844. 4. Sirius 5. Rodin 6. Alfred Hitchcock 7. Sheikh Mujibur Rehman 8. General Cariappa 9. The Centaur 10. Washington Irving 11. Edward Jenner 12. Vishwanathan Anand 13. Mona Lisa 14. Dial 15. War Memorial Arch 16. Gullivers Travels 17. Neil Armstrong 18. Jawaharlal Nehru 19. Basalt. 20. Rigid.



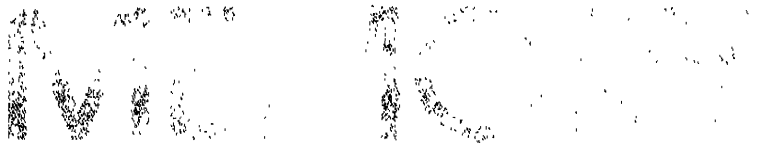
your accumulated learning.

Today the study of memory stresses on cognitive or mental processes. Cognition is the internal processing of information received from the environment by our senses. One aspect of this processing is memory.

Over the years psychologists have put forward many theories on memory. One theory says that memory consists of the three mental processes: Encoding, Storage and Retrieval.

forget things. His answer will probably be something like, "Oh, just the passage of time, I guess." Press a little harder, and your friend might say, "Well, as time passes, my impressions of what I learned just decay and get weaker and weaker until they finally fade away." Your friend believes that the memory traces in the brain, decay with time.

The question that we face now is—why do we forget?



Text: Sonali Shankar

HELP! What do I do?! I just can't learn these formulae! How do I remember all these names?! How will I recall everything I have learnt!"

We all say this, we all panic about learning and recalling—especially before the examinations.

Can you imagine life without memory? You would not be able to recall joyful moments, or painful times—each moment would be a new experience. And each person would be a stranger, each task a novel challenge, and every language foreign.

Your memory is your mind's storehouse, the reservoir of all

Encoding is the process of receiving information from the environment via our sense organs, and transforming it into a code that can be stored in our brains. The process following this—Storage—involves putting this coded information into memory. Retrieval is the process of gaining access to the encoded, stored information when it is to be used.

Since we are talking about memory, it would be interesting to understand what we mean by forgetting.

Forgetting generally refers to the apparent loss of information already encoded and stored in Long Term Memory *(see box on facing page)*.

Ask a friend what makes him

Many experiments done on memory tell us that learning new things interferes with our memory of what we learned earlier. They also suggest that things learned earlier interferes with our memory of things learned later.

For example, suppose you go to a party where you are introduced to many new people. By the time the evening is over, you would probably have forgotten the names of the people you met. That is because your memory of the names you heard earlier in the evening has interfered with the names you learned later. This is known as ***Retroactive Interference***. It is also difficult to remember the names you heard later in the

Information Processing

Ideas about memory that emphasize the processing of information in stages, or steps, are known as *Information-Processing Theories*. A well-accepted theory is the 'Atkinson-Shiffrin Information-Processing theory' put forward by two psychologists, Richard Atkinson and Richard Shiffrin in 1968. According to them there are three basic stages in human memory.

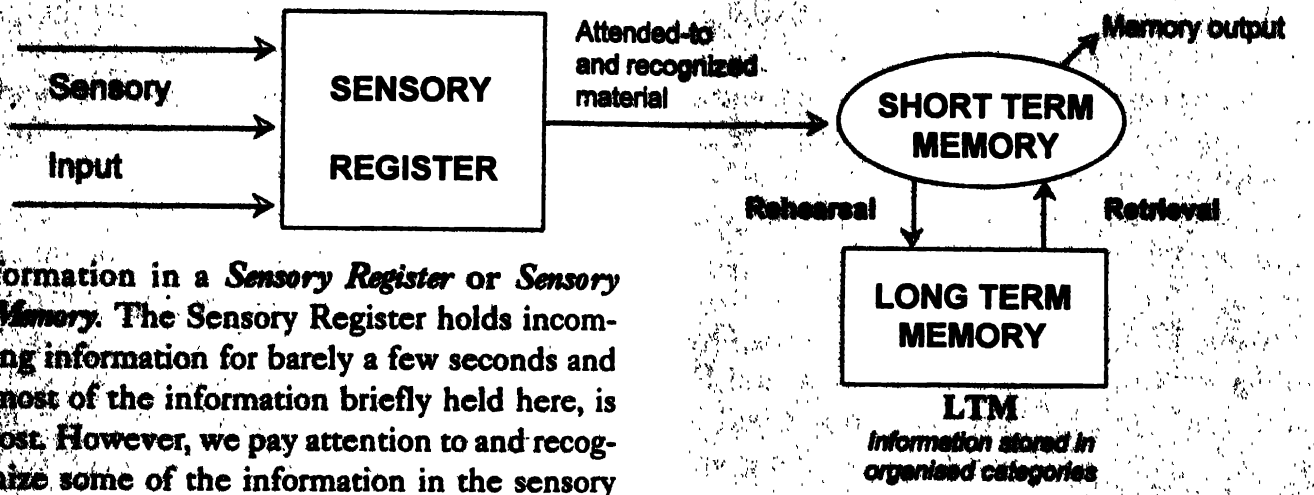
The first step is the very brief storage of information in a *Sensory Register* or *Sensory Memory*. The Sensory Register holds incoming information for barely a few seconds and most of the information briefly held here, is lost. However, we pay attention to and recognize some of the information in the sensory register and when we do this, the attended-to information is passed on to step two, that is th *Short Term Memory (STM)*.

Short Term Memory is memory that holds information received from the Sensory Register for upto 30 seconds. It has a very limited storage capacity and because the capacity of this memory is so small, most of the information stored here is lost because it gets displaced by new, incoming items of information.

However, some of the information in Short Term Memory is neither lost, nor is it recalled and used by us. It is passed along to the next memory stage — *Long Term Memory (LTM)*.

The moving of information from Short Term Memory to Long Term Memory takes place by a process called Rehearsal. It means keeping items of information in the centre of our attention, perhaps by repeating them silently or aloud. The number of rehearsals is very important in deciding what items will move on to Long Term Memory. In general, the more an item is rehearsed, the more likely it is to become part of Long Term Memory.

The storge capacity of Long Term Memory is said to be limitless. Whatever information reaches this stage in our memory, is said to last for days, months, years, or even a lifetime.



When we think of memory it is usually Long Term Memory that we have in mind. Information here is organised, categorised and classified so that it is a bit like a library with a good indexing system.

Long Term Memory is divided into two. The first, *Semantic memory*, includes our knowledge of word meanings and the rules for using language. This memory is considered to be very stable, because there is little forgetting of the meanings of the words of our language and the rules for their use. *Episodic memory*, the second part, consists of specific things that happened to us at particular times and places. Thus Episodic memory is the autobiographical memory, long or short, in our lives.

Mnemonics

There are some simple ways by which you can improve your memory.

Mnemonics (pronounced "nemoniks"), comes from the Greek word for 'memory', and refers to specific memory-improvement techniques. Most mnemonic devices rely on linking, or association of the to-be-remembered material, This linking is with the organised set of images or words that we already have in our Long Term Memory. They thus serve as 'retrieval cues'. To make things simpler, we can think of these retrieval cues as memory pegs; the to-be-remembered items are hung on these 'pegs'.

A very simple mnemonic that helps us remember the Great Lakes in the U.S.A., is the word **HOMES**. The letters in this word are used as pegs on which the names of the great lakes are hung —Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior.

Try and simplify your learning, and also make it fun by using mnemonics. I am sure you will find it much easier to recall things you have learnt, as well as learn things you thought were almost impossible to get into your head!

When you are getting ready for exams, keep in mind five keywords—**Planning**, **Rehearsal**, **Organisation**, **Feedback**, and **Review**. These five words will help you deal with all that exam tension, will help you learn, and will help you remember and recall all that you have learnt.

* **Plan** a study schedule that you can stick to.
* **Rehearse** whatever you are learning again and again. Remember—continous rehearsal helps in the transferring of information from your Short Term Memory to your Long Term Memory.
* **Organise** whatever you are learning, so that things can be encoded systematically in your memory, and the retrieval of the information is also aided.
* Try to get some idea of how well you remember the material you are learning. In other words, get some **feedback**. Keep testing yourself. By this you will also be practising your retrieval skills.
* **Review** before the exams. It is always important to go over, just scanning through, what you have learnt, the day before your exams.

evening because the names you learned earlier have interfered with the memory of the names learned at the end of the party. This is known as ***Proactive Interference***.

Retrieving information from Long Term Memory is aided by Retrieval Cues, or reminders, which direct our memory search to the right part of our Long Term Memory library. When we do not have appropriate retrieval cues that can help search for stored information, the items we are looking for may not be found—and we forget.

Emotional factors can also play a role in the failure of retrieving information, which in turn is the cause of so much forgetting. If we encode information while we are in one emotional state, and try to recall it while we are in another, our recall may suffer, and we feel as though we can't remember.

The King Who Loved Flowers

Story : O.P. Bhagat
Illustrations : Subir Roy

IT HAPPENED long, long ago.

People lived in mud houses then. Even the king's palace was a large mud house with some woodwork.

It was grand in its own way. It was the largest house in the kingdom. And it had all the comforts that could be had in those days.

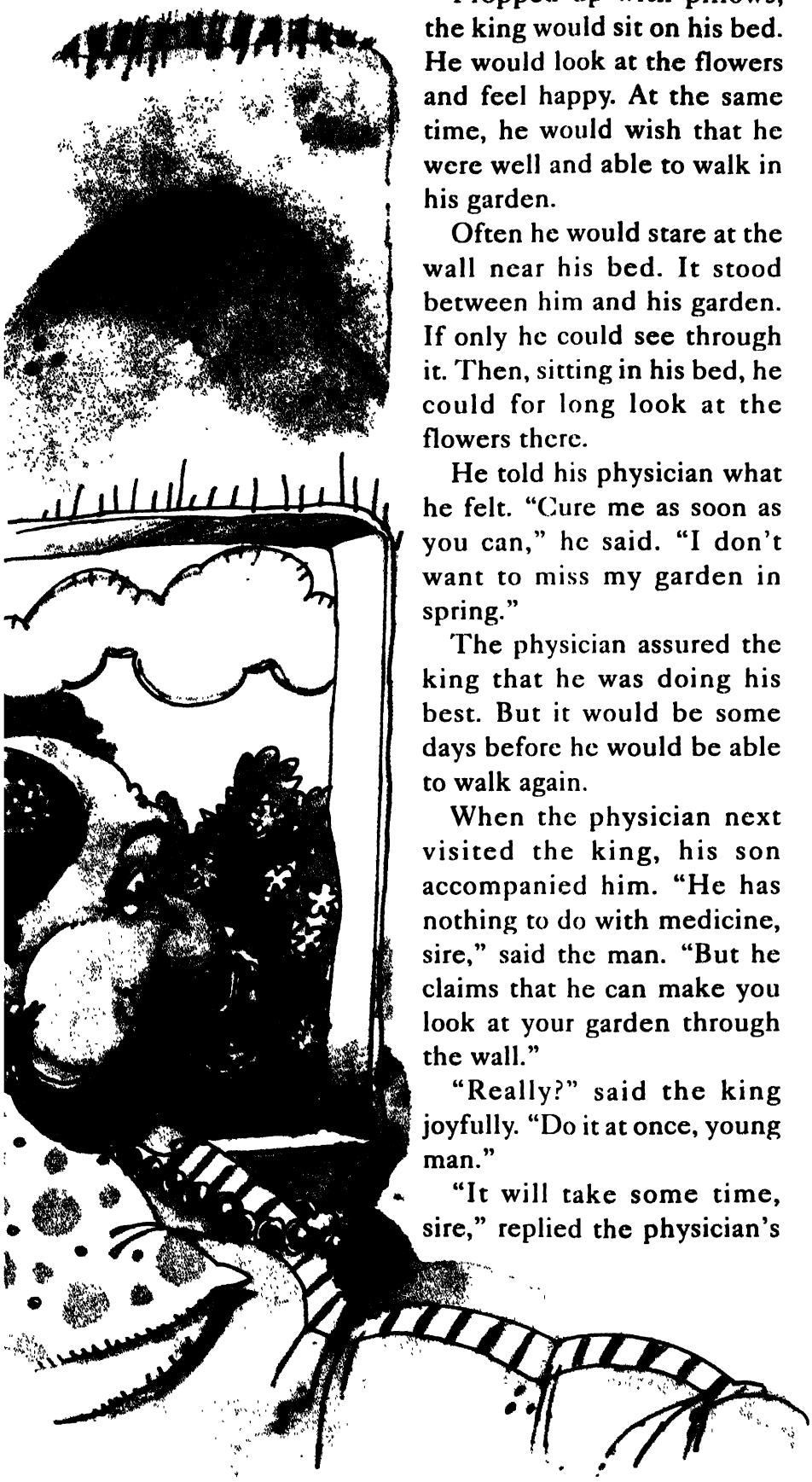
The king liked the good things of life. More than anything else, he liked flowers. He had a beautiful garden in the palace. His bedroom stood beside it.

Every morning the king went to his garden. He walked about there and looked at the flowers. He again did so in the evening. Spring was his favourite season. More flowers bloomed in his garden then than at any other time of the year.

One spring happened to be different for the king. As the season began, he met with a mishap. He was injured and could not walk. For days he was bedridden.

The courtiers called on the king daily. They knew of his love for flowers and brought him bunches of the best they could find.





Propped up with pillows, the king would sit on his bed. He would look at the flowers and feel happy. At the same time, he would wish that he were well and able to walk in his garden.

Often he would stare at the wall near his bed. It stood between him and his garden. If only he could see through it. Then, sitting in his bed, he could for long look at the flowers there.

He told his physician what he felt. "Cure me as soon as you can," he said. "I don't want to miss my garden in spring."

The physician assured the king that he was doing his best. But it would be some days before he would be able to walk again.

When the physician next visited the king, his son accompanied him. "He has nothing to do with medicine, sire," said the man. "But he claims that he can make you look at your garden through the wall."

"Really?" said the king joyfully. "Do it at once, young man."

"It will take some time, sire," replied the physician's son. "But not more than a day."

The king granted him that much time. Then, at the young man's request, he agreed to be carefully carried out of the room.

The physician's son went back home and returned with some tools and other things. Also with him were two or three men to help him in the work he proposed to do.

All day, assisted by his men, he worked in the king's bedroom. By evening he got the room cleaned and rearranged the bed near the wall.

Then he informed the king that all was ready. Carefully the king was carried back to his bedroom. The young man helped him sit against some pillows in the bed.

The king looked at the wall. But it no longer acted as a barrier between him and his garden. He could see right through it.

He looked at the flowers and shrubs and hedges. A light breeze brought in the scent of the flowers. The sound of birds also came in.

The king gazed at his garden and then at the young man and at his garden again. It was a miracle, wasn't it?

That miracle was an opening in the wall, fitted with a wooden frame. It was the first window in that kingdom.

PANDA CLUB OF INDIA

Newsletter Vol. I No. 6

Hi friends,

I have got used to the heat now, I do not miss home. Besides, all the love and affection you have showered on me has made me so happy I don't feel nostalgic any more. We are all one big family here in India! Thank you for adopting me.

I am very glad you are enjoying our shows and are interacting with each other through this newsletter. By the way, I had a great time with my young friends in Chennai. I took a long stroll on the VGP Golden Beach and watched the sea and the small fishing boats in the distance, and just loved it.

Very soon the summer heat will give way to the monsoons and the rains will bring welcome relief. I can see you all making paper boats and sneaking out of the house to get drenched. Parents, please don't stop your children from having fun—remember your childhood! I must stop now since I want to share some of the thoughts of our friends who have written in from all over the country. Keep writing and live every moment happily.

Lots of love always,

Panda

Dear Panda,

I like C. W. and through it I have become your good friend. Stories, puzzles and quizzes—all are so good that I can spend hours with it.

Esha Dua, New Delhi

I like your Panda Club because it expresses our views—I feel strongly about protection and shelter for animals who cannot speak, and Panda Club deals with such issues.

Anish Shah, Panchgani

Panda Club is creating awareness about vital issues. It provides very informative, knowledgeable, adventurous and attractive programmes specially made for children. Moreover, this is the only club of its kind, exclusively for children!

Prateek, Ahmedabad

I love Panda Club shows because we can see Dennis in action in the cartoons. The schedule time for the shows on T. V. is such that I can watch them leisurely.

Ishan Bais, Calcutta

I am interested in Panda Club because I find many interesting stories, cartoons and wisdom in it. I love reading and have been reading CW for 14 years.

Dolma Lopchan, Sarpang, Bhutan

I like Panda Club because Panda is most huggable and soft. He solves our problems. I also like Panda because its programmes are nice. Hip hip hurray to Panda!

Anandi Rao, Mumbai

I loved your letter in CW . I also love your Panda Club shows. I want more shows like this to be shown on T. V.

Manisha Roy Choudhary, New Delhi



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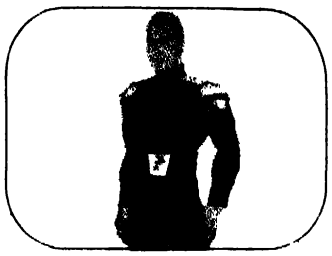


Jamboree at Chennai

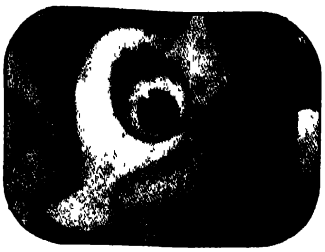
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1. **Jatin Chhitara**, Kanpur 2. **Rajwant Kaur**, Delhi 3. **Abhishek Vashistha**, Gurgaon, Haryana



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Tuesday 5.30 P.M. on DD II—RIMBA'S ISLAND : Six lively, lovable, colourful costumed animal characters who dwell deep in the idyllic rain forest, share their joys and learn from one another catchy songs and simple stories—(dubbed in Hindi)



Thursday 5.00 P.M. on DD II—SUPERHUMAN SAMURAI SYBER SQUAD : Sam Collins, a video game champion and leader of a teenage garage band, fights an alien warlord 'Kilokahn' who has infected the digital world with monster "megaviruses."

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FIRST SERVE ENTERTAINMENT (FSE) INDIA PVT. LTD.
YOUR CALENDAR OF PANDA CLUB SHOWS

CHANNEL	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
DOORDARSHAN METRO		FLASH GORDON 9:30 PM	RIMBA'S ISLAND 5:30 PM		SUPERHUMAN SAMURAI SYBER SQUAD 5:00 PM PHANTOM 5:30 PM		DEFENDERS OF THE EARTH 11:30 PM [illegible] 5:30 PM
DSK THIRUVANANTHAPURAM	[illegible] 4:00 PM						

TREES

ishnan (11)
Guhathakurta



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The treasure of Kumbher

Story : Krishna Narayan
Illustrations : Nilabho Dhar Chowdhury

Arriving at Kumbher Prithviraj Chandola meets Senor Noronha and asks to be made a part of his army. Senor Noronha lays down a condition—if Prithviraj can win the wrestling contest to be held in Kumbher, he would appoint him as his personal bodyguard. Prithviraj wins the contest defeating Abdel Khan, Ismail Beg's right hand man. Pleased, Ismail Beg employs Prithviraj. Impressed, Senor Noronha asks Prithviraj to bring him Jai Singh.



Part 11

AFTER the depressing wetness of the monsoons and the humid discomfort of the following months, the onset of winter is a pleasurable event in north India. The air is cold and bracing; the rivers run full, fed by the melting snows from the Himalayas, the countryside is lush and green.

In the midst of one such lush field, tucked away deep in the village of Kolari, stood a hut. It was noon. A girl appeared at the door of the hut holding a pail. She paused, then walked to one corner of the plot and emptied the garbage. A man, gaunt and bent with age, hurried after her.

"*Rajkumari*, you shouldn't," he said, reaching for the pail.

The girl turned and smiled, "Duler Singh, I am no longer Chandravati, the princess. If I am supposed to be your daughter, I must behave like one."

Duler Singh was obviously unhappy but held his tongue. He shuffled back into the hut.

Raja Balwant Singh was seated on a bench within. He had aged visibly during the last few weeks. Only his eyes retained their former majesty, eyes that had witnessed both the glory of power and the ignominy of defeat.

"I cannot bear to watch the *Rajkumari* do menial work," said Duler Singh. He waved his shrivelled arm. "I cannot even help her."

"You chastise yourself without reason," said Raja Balwant Singh mildly. "You are helping us enough. By sheltering us, you risk your life."

"And gladly," replied Duler Singh. "I would lay down my life for you, Your Highness."

The king sighed, and his mind harked back to the time when Duler Singh had served as a stable-boy in the royal stables of Kumbher, many years ago. Raja Balwant Singh, then a young prince, had learnt his first lessons in the art of horsemanship from Duler Singh.

In due course, Balwant Singh ascended the throne. The stable-boy became a trusted servant. There was no one in the court—not even among the members of the royal family—whom Raja Balwant Singh trusted more.

Then tragedy had struck. Duler Singh had been thrown off a horse during one of their excursions. His shoulder had struck a rock and had shattered at the impact. The wound had healed with time, but it left his right arm paralysed.

The king allowed him to stay on in the palace, but Duler Singh sought permission to leave service and retire to his village. For twenty years, he had lived in Kolari in isolation. Only the king knew of his existence, and sent him small sums of money from time to time.

Duler Singh's hut nowprovidedRaja Balwant Singh and Chandravati with the ideal hiding place. Neither Janki Devi nor Ismail Beg would discover them as long as they remained at Kolari.

Chandravati adjusted to the alien surroundings and routine as if in the manner born. Raja Balwant Singh marvelled at the resilience of his daughter. He himself was becoming increasingly restless. He yearned to know what had become of his kingdom and his son. Was Jai Singh still alive? If so, what had happened to him? What of the ring he had sent through the young man who had saved them from the bandits?

A time came when he could wait no longer. So one day, on the pretext of stretching his limbs, Raja Balwant Singh strolled some distance away from the hut; instead of returning, he quickened his pace and made his way to the nearest cluster of houses. A group of men were squatting in front of a thatched stall. They fell silent and looked up curiously as he approached. Strangers were rare in these parts, rarer still on winter nights. Afraid of being recognised, the king pulled his blanket tighter around him, drew it over his head and under the chin.

He yearned to know what had bec
Was Jai Singh still alive? If so,

The stall owner offered him a pot of steaming tea. He cupped his hands around the clay pot, sipped the tea and looked around. The men were watching every move of his, warily.

Too late, Raja Balwant Singh realised he had no money to pay for his tea. He put the pot down. "I have left my money behind, good friend," he said, addressing the owner. "But I give you my word, you shall be paid tomorrow."

The stall owner said nothing. He reached forward, grabbed the king's blanket and held it tight. One of the men scrambled to his feet and pounced upon the king. The blanket ripped away as Raja Balwant Singh wrenched himself free. He knocked down the lantern hanging from the thatched roof. Then, under cover of darkness, he fled back to Duler Singh's hut.

Chandravati listened to her father's account with growing annoyance.

"I could not help myself," said Raja Balwant Singh. "I only wanted to find out about Jai Singh."

"And almost exposed yourself in doing so," said Chandravati sharply. "Father, don't you realise that if you had been caught, it would have been the end of everything? Why didn't you send Duler Singh instead? Why didn't you tell us first? We were worried sick !"

"It was a dangerous thing to do," added Duler Singh.

Raja Balwant Singh said nothing. He closed his eyes. Chandravati felt the pain within him and grew instantly contrite. She reached over and stroked his brow.

"I am sorry, father," she said. "I know how you suffer each day. But just think, if word of this should reach the ears of Ismail Beg, and he decides to investigate..."

"It will not happen again," said Raja Balwant Singh.

"You promise?"

"You have my word."

Chandravati walked slowly outside the hut, her brows knit in thought. Despite her father's assurance, she did not trust him. It was only a matter of time before his anxiety overcame caution.

There was another cause for Chandravati's concern. She had discovered that Duler Singh was an alcoholic. She sympathised with his condition, but the fact remained that Duler Singh could not be trusted either. His addiction made him a potential informer, a threat to their safety.

But whom else could she turn to? Before Chandravati's eyes, there appeared the vision of a knight galloping towards her on a milk-white steed, vanquishing the enemy with wide sweeps of his sword. He approached without breaking stride, and as he came abreast of her he bent low to gather her up by the waist onto the saddle, and she recognised him as the handsome young man who had saved her from the bandits. Would she ever meet him again?



A gust of wind flung the window open and brought Chandravati back to earth. No, she ought not to dream in this fashion. She was on her own.

*

Barely had a week elapsed before Raja Balwant Singh slipped out again to the village. When he returned, he faced the combined wrath of his daughter and his manservant. He was too dispirited even to defend himself.

"I cannot help it," said the king listlessly. "If I don't know what is happening in Kumbher, I shall go mad."

That was when Chandravati realised that her father's will had collapsed. "I shall go to Kumbher myself," she said.

"Silly girl ! You would be found out in no time, and I couldn't bear to lose you both."

Chandravati sat beside the old man. "We cannot hide here forever, can we? I have a plan, father. I only need your blessing." Chandravati then explained what she intended to do. Raja Balwant Singh and Duler Singh stared at her in astonishment as they heard the plan.

Four days later a horse-drawn cart clattered in through the east gate of Kumbher. Duler Singh sat in the driver's seat, reins in one hand, a half-empty bottle in the other. He took the avenue that wound up to the palace. He was stopped at the gates.

"Out of my way!" he cried.

"Where do you think you are going?" demanded the sentry.

Duler Singh threw him a drunken grin. "I have come to see old friends after many years. I used to work at the palace, see? Is that fellow Samba still here? He used to be a stable-boy in those days, just like me."

The sentry approached the horse cart with a frown. "That is my son in there, fast asleep," said Duler Singh.

The sentry decided after his cursory inspection that the man was harmless. "Use the servants' gate, fool," he said.

Duler Singh made his way to the servants' entrance. He pulled up in front of the royal stables.

"Who is there?" asked a voice. A man emerged from the stalls, pail and brush in hand.

"Well, if it isn't Samba himself!" exclaimed Duler Singh. "You rogue, you! Don't you recognise me?"

Samba's face split into a grin of surprise, "Duler Singh! What are you doing here?"

"I have grown old," replied Duler Singh. "I am going to request the king to let me live out my days here. I believe he will not refuse me."

The grin on Samba's face vanished. "Haven't you heard? Raja Balwant Singh and the princess are missing? And that the prince is held prisoner?"

"What?"

There was a movement in the carriage and a figure sat up. Samba's eyes shifted. "That is Chandrabhanu, my son," explained Duler Singh. "Hey Bhanu, wake up, we are at the palace!"

A slim, turbaned youth jumped down from the rear of the carriage and smiled shyly at Samba before busying himself with the horses. "Samba, we will talk later," said Duler Singh. "Another thing, don't mention our presence to anyone. Now that I cannot meet the king, I think I will simply rest here for a few days and return to Kolari."

Duler Singh and Chandrabhanu walked past the stables and chose a room at the farthest end in which to put their belongings. Duler Singh scratched his stubble. "You have passed your first test," he whispered. "Samba has not seen through your disguise, Princess."

Chandravati did not return the smile. Her mind was still horrified at the ravages that Ismail Beg had wrought on her beloved city.

Chandravati sat beside the old man. "We cannot hide here forever, can we? I have a plan, father. I only need your blessing."

There was only one saving grace. "Jai Singh is still alive," said Chandravati to herself. "I must find a way to free him." She turned to Duler Singh. "Our task has just begun. It will end only when my father regains the throne."

*

Ismail Beg lay sprawled on the couch, drunk. "There is no use," he muttered to himself. "Thirty-six days have passed, and I am no closer to finding that accursed treasure." He raised himself on his elbows as if addressing someone across him. "Where is it?"

The door flew open and a man careened in and collapsed on the floor. At the door stood Abdel Khan.

"This fellow was caught trying to break open Jai Singh's cell," he reported. He bent down and pulled the man's hair within an upward jerk. Kunwar Singh squealed in pain. Ismail Beg's eyes hardened. In them Kunwar Singh saw the shadow of death.

"What were you doing in the dungeons, my friend?"

Kunwar Singh did not reply. Ismail Beg flung a goblet of wine on Kunwar Singh's face. "Answer me!"

Kunwar Singh made no attempt to wipe it away. "Send him away," he sobbed, "and I will tell you."

"Abdel Khan, leave us alone," said Ismail Beg.



"I know you will not believe me," Kunwar Singh said through bloodied, swollen lips. "But it was the other way round. Abdel Khan was letting Jai Singh out of the cells, and I caught him doing so."

Ismail Beg kicked Kunwar Singh.

"It is the truth! I was going to call Samba, our coach driver, when I saw Abdel Khan standing outside holding a horse, and a guard was helping Jai Singh up the dungeon steps. I swear it!" said Kunwar Singh.

"I don't believe a word of it," said Ismail Beg. "What proof do you have?"

"What proof has Abdel Khan got that I was setting Jai Singh free?" countered Kunwar Singh.

"Abdel Khan would never do such a thing. He is my right hand. I would trust him with my life."

"When you came into Kumbher through that tunnel, did you not trust me with your life? Now you would rather believe that murderous ape!"

Ismail Beg said nothing. His innate suspicious nature, coupled with his depressed mood and semi-drunken state further impaired his judgement. It now appeared to him that it was just possible that Kunwar Singh was speaking the truth.

He stood up, "On your feet," he ordered Kunwar Singh. "I wish to speak to your mother. Now." He did not see the sly smile that appeared on

Kunwar Singh's face as he followed him to Janki Devi's residence.

"You are a fool and an ingrate," said Janki Devi to Ismail Beg when they met.

Ismail Beg raised his hands. "What have I done to you? Nothing at all," he said placatingly. "Tell me, do you really believe Abdel Khan would stab me in the back?"

"That is for you to decide," replied Janki Devi acidly. "I happen to know that Abdel Khan is no longer the same after the wrestling competition. You left him lying there, and I hear he has taken it as an insult. He even thinks you might hire the other fellow in his place."

"That is ridiculous!"

"No more ridiculous than accusing my son of trying to free Jai Singh," retorted Janki Devi.

What should be done?"

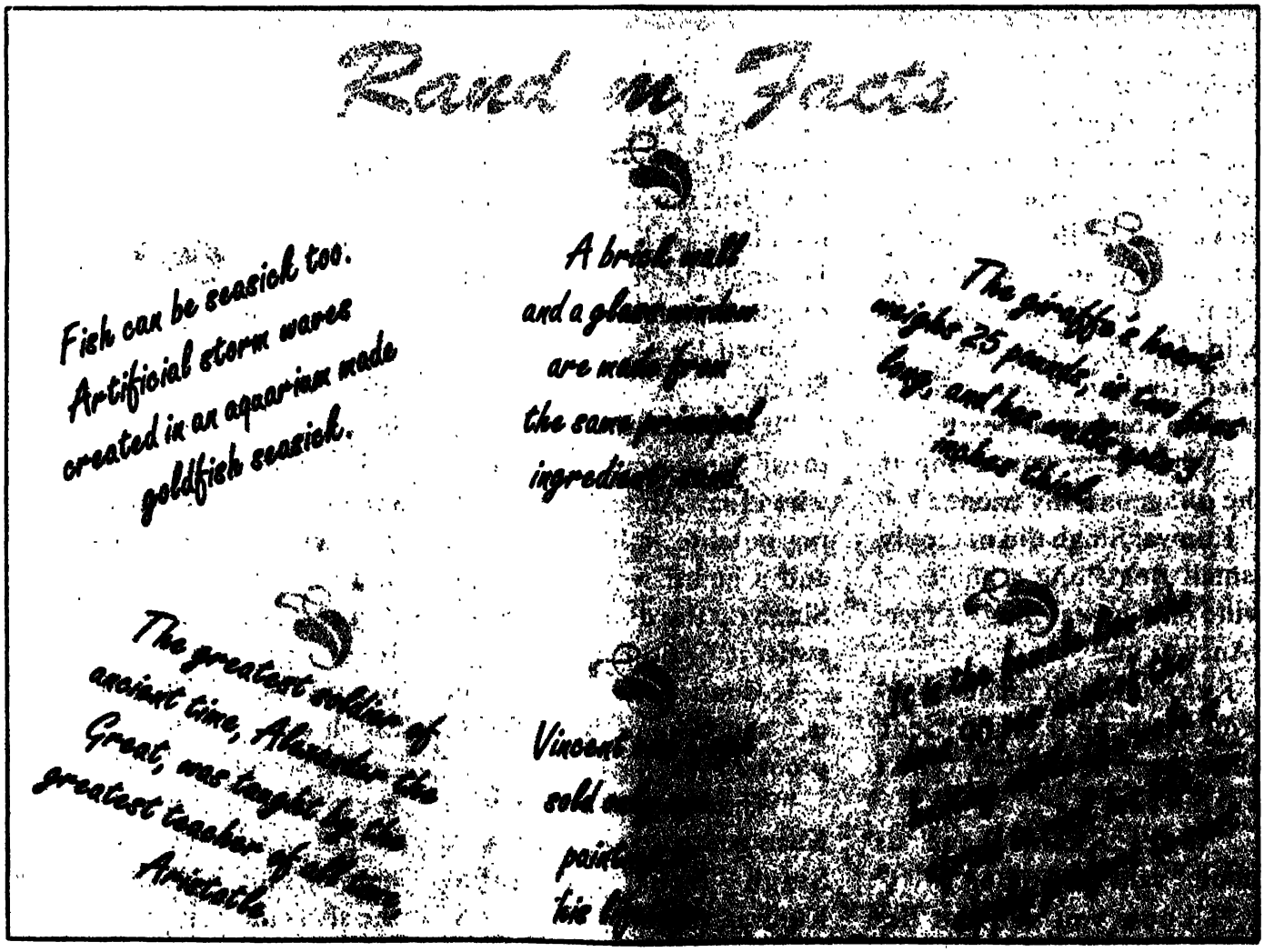
"It is necessary to shift Jai Singh elsewhere," replied Janki Devi promptly. "Send him to Najibabad. Hand him over to Rukhayat Khan. He will be safe there."

Ismail Beg left.

Janki Devi took a deep breath. The seed of suspicion had been well and truly planted in Ismail Beg's mind. Soon it would take root and grow. He would then act, perhaps on her advice, and shift Jai Singh to Najibabad. He thought Rukhayat Khan was a friend, but she knew better. Rukhayat Khan had been suitably bribed.

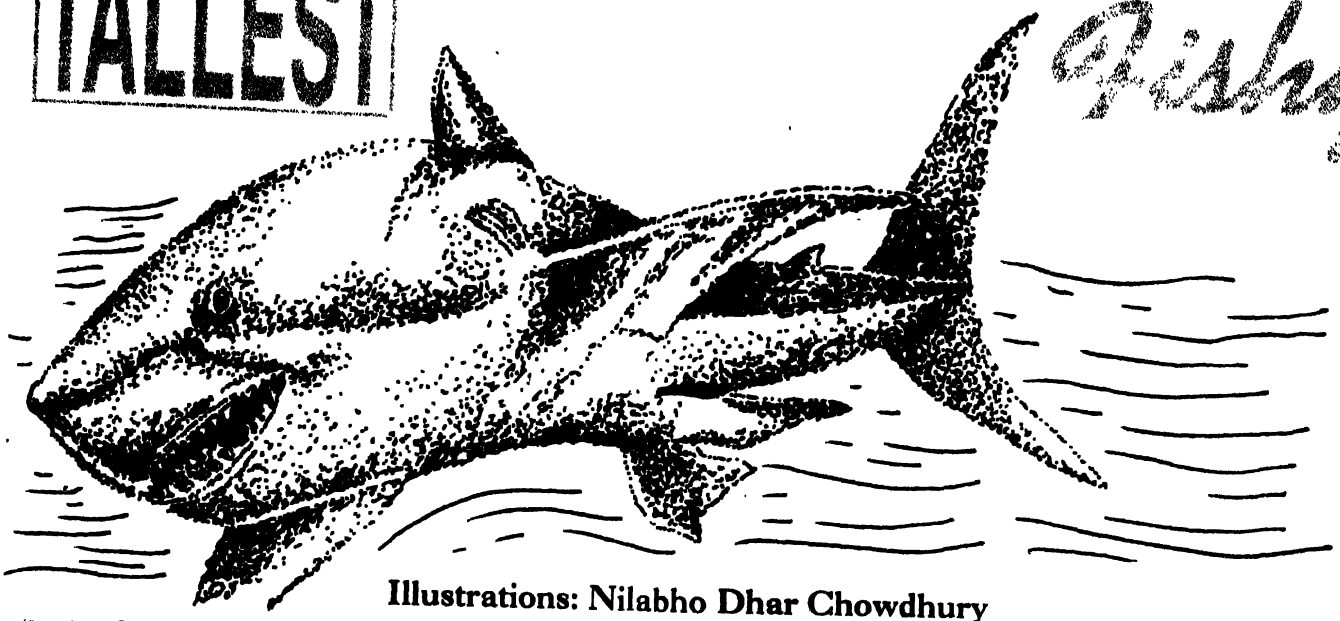
Ismail Beg, however, had other plans. He decided to follow Janki Devi's advice only in part. He felt it best to move Jai Singh out of Kumbher. But not to Najibabad— never!

(To be continued)



SMALLEST
LARGEST
TALLEST

Something Fishy



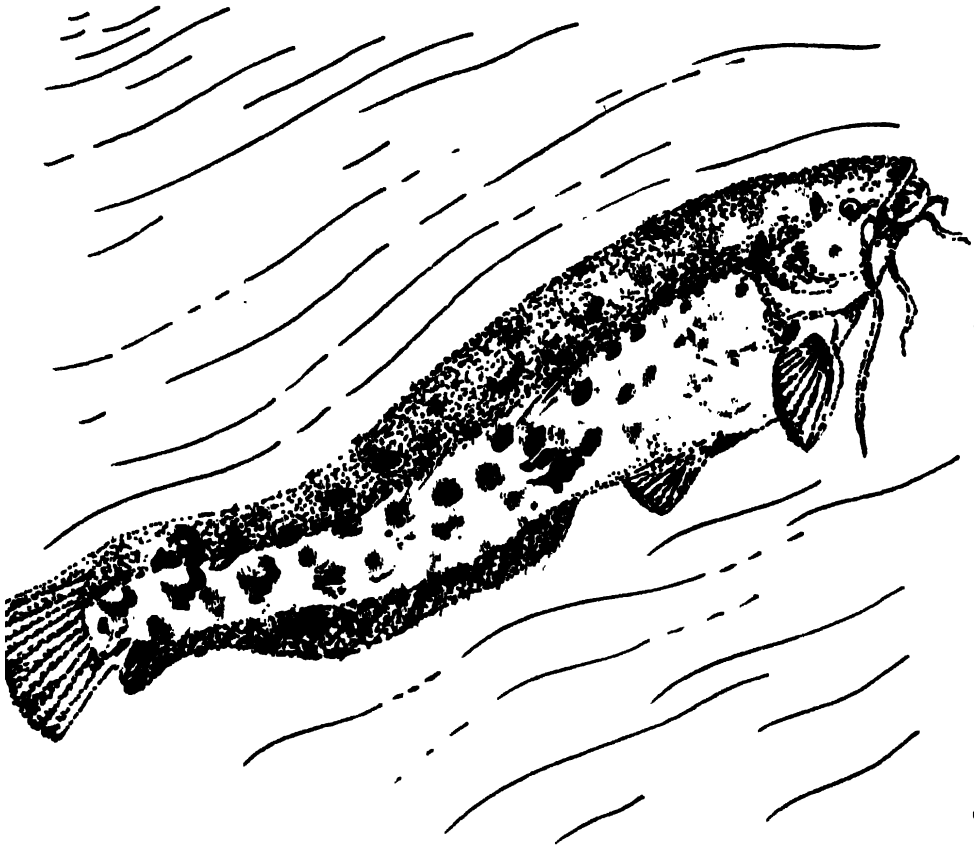
Illustrations: Nilabho Dhar Chowdhury

THERE are more kinds of fish in the world than all other kinds of land and water vertebrates put together. They are perhaps the most varied in shape than any other particular species. For example, there are fish that look like rocks and those that are like worms or birds; some look like snakes and others resemble porcupines. There are tiny fish and large ones, dull-looking fish and brilliantly-hued ones, gentle fish and poisonous and dangerous ones. They are so adaptable that they can live in any water, be it the freezing cold waters of the Arctic and Antarctic or the steaming hot waters of the tropical rain forests. Many fish live on the ocean floor, in caves, desert water holes, marshes and even swamps. Some fish like the African and South American lungfish can live in moist mud for months.

Fish and their cousins are delicacies the world over, and fishing industry supports many a country's economy. Odd-looking and versatile, these creatures rule the waters. Now, how about some fishy facts for your file?

- The first fish appeared in the world around **500 million years** ago. These fish are called **Ostracoderms.** They were also the first animals with a backbone. Scientists believe that the history of all other vertebrates can be traced back to these creatures.
- The **Age of Fishes** began about 410 million years ago and lasted for about 50 million years. During this period, fish developed remarkably. This age of fishes is called **Devonian period** by scientists.
- The **first modern fish** or **Teleosts** appeared during the **Triassic Period,** which began about 240 million years ago.
- The **largest fish** is the **Whale Shark** which may grow more than **12 m long** and weigh upto **15 metric tons,** that is twice as much as an African elephant.
- The **largest freshwater fish** is the **Arapaima** found in the rivers of South American jungles. It weighs upto **90 kgs** and measures between **2m to 2.5m.**

- The **smallest fish** is the **Pygmy Goby** which is less than **15mm** long. It is found in the Philippines.
- The **most poisonous fish** is the **Stone Fish.** Its poisonous spines can kill a man in a matter of minutes if he is unfortunate enough to step over one.

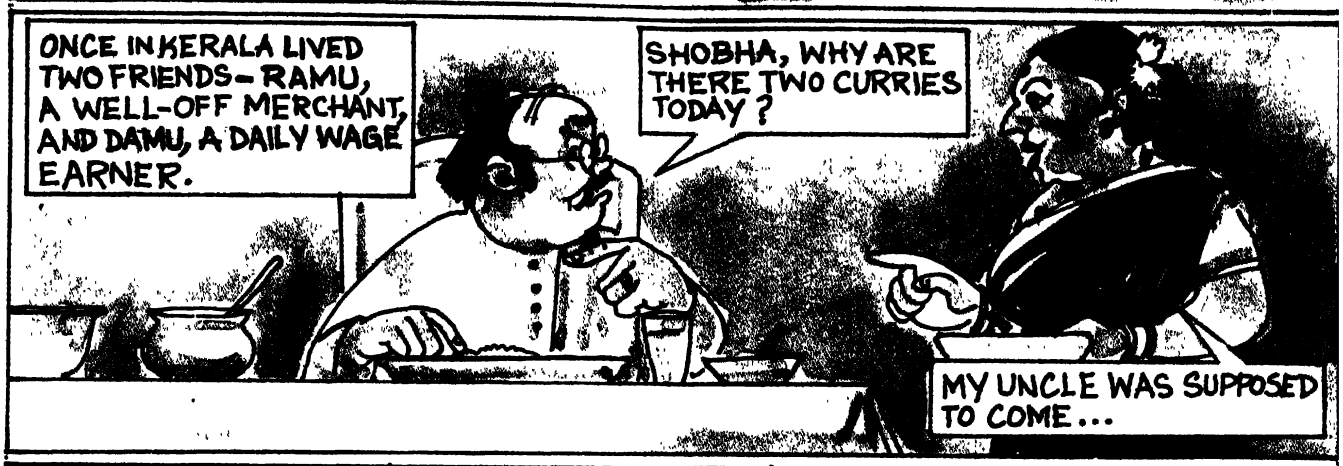


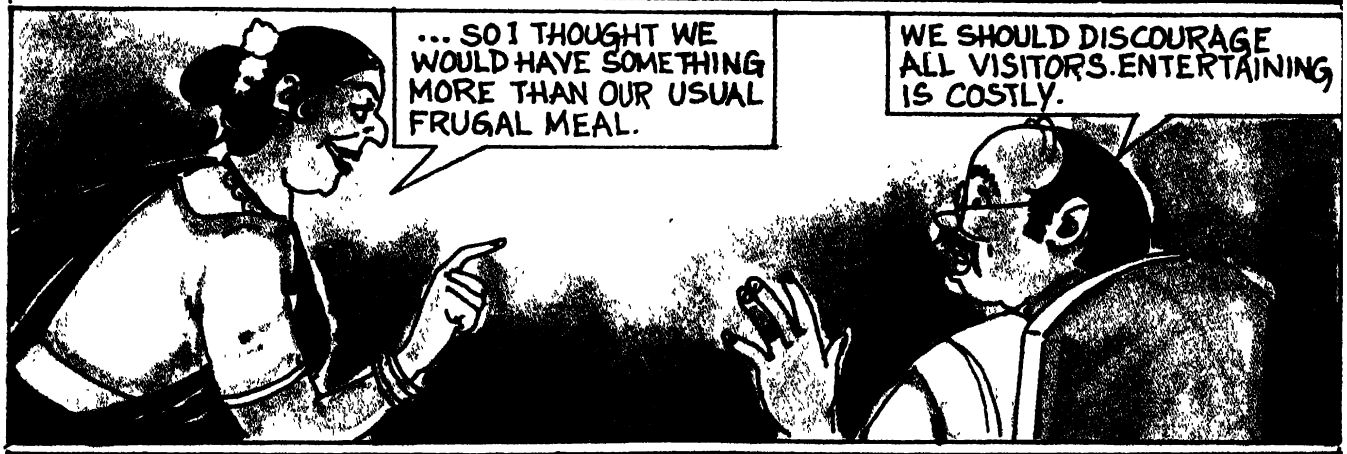
- Ever heard of **four-eyed creatures** outside mythology? Well, there is a fish called **Anableps**, that has its eyes divided into two portions. When it swims just under the surface of water, the top portion of its eyes see above the surface, while the bottom half is busy scanning the waters below! The **Flounder**, a deep sea fish, has both its eyes on one side of its body. This is necessary because it lies on the ocean floor with both eyes facing up. It is also the chameleon of the waters as it changes colour according to its environment.
- Another unusual fact about the eyes of a fish is that it can see simultaneously both to the left and the right. This could be because they have no necks to turn and you must agree that it is mighty inconvenient to turn one's whole body to look to one side.
- You must have heard of the python and anaconda swallowing preys larger than themselves. There is an underwater version of these reptiles. The **Black Swallower** is a fish that has its mouth in the form of a hinge that can open wide enough to swallow fish twice its size. The stomach can stretch to accommodate its food too. The fish is then gradually digested.
- If someone asks you, "Can fish fly?" you can confidently say that they do. The **Flying Hatchet fish** can fly upto a distance of 3m, taking a flying leap from the surface of the water. It uses its side fins as its 'wings'.
- Just as there is a flying fish, why not a 'walking fish'? There is one that can actually walk from one lake to another, using its tail and side fins to crawl along! It uses its special air breathing organs that help it breathe out of water. If you see one walking towards you, you can assume it to be the **Walking Catfish.**
- The **Bristlemouths** are the largest group of fish. Scientists believe that there are several billions of billions of them.
- The science of the **study of fish** is called **Ichthyology.**
- We have taste buds on our tongue, right? But fish have them located in other parts of the mouth and even other parts of the body!

Compiled by
Thangamani

NINETY-NINE

STORY: SHANKAR
ILLUSTRATIONS: Beejee



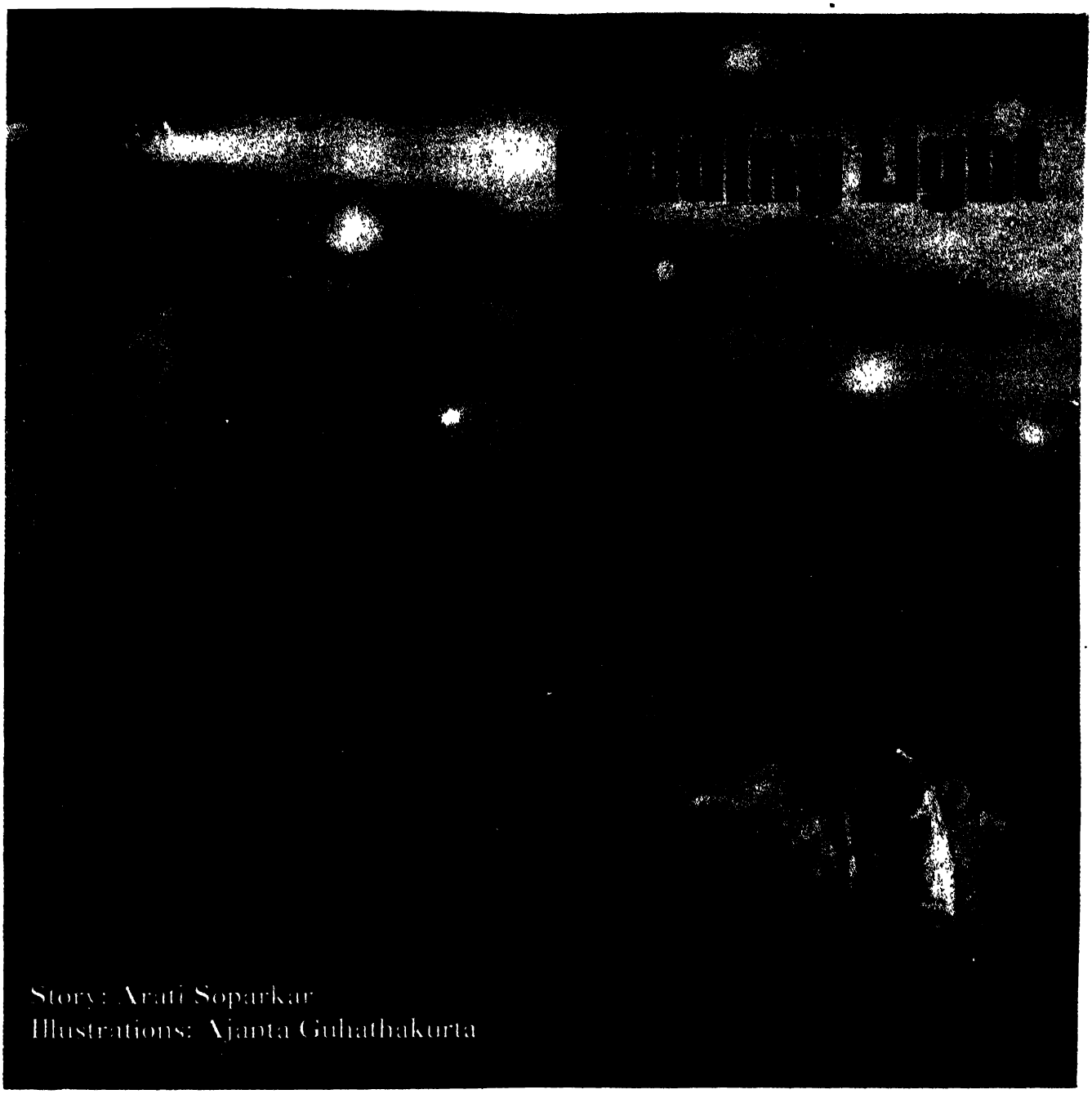





HOW COME CHEERU AND DAMU ARE ALWAYS SO CHEERFUL EVEN THOUGH HE EARNS LESS THAN RAMU ?
ONE DAY
HOW IS IT YOU SPEND SO MUCH AND LAUGH ALL THE WHILE ? RAMU AND I ARE ALWAYS WORRIED ABOUT MONEY.
I DON'T KNOW. ASK RAMU. HE IS CLEVER, ISN'T HE ?
LATER
DAMU AND CHEERU ARE SO CAREFREE BECAUSE HE HAS NEVER SEEN THE MAGIC OF NINETY-NINE.
WHAT'S THAT ?
WAIT AND SEE.


SOME DAYS LATER
I DON'T HEAR DAMU AND CHEERU LAUGHING, OR SMELL FISH AND MUTTON BEING COOKED...
...THEY'RE ALWAYS BUSY WEAVING MATS AND MAKING MONEY. THEY LOOK UNHAPPY TOO. WHY?
ASK YOUR FRIEND.
WHY IS EVERYTHING SO DIFFERENT NOW, CHEERU? WHY DON'T YOU SING ANY MORE...
...WHY D'YOU LOOK UNHAPPY? WHY DO YOU WEAVE MATS ALL DAY LONG?
WE JUST LIVE DIFFERENTLY NOW, THAT'S ALL.


IF YOU NEED MONEY, I'LL...
OH, NO! I'LL TELL YOU. SOME WEEKS BACK WHEN DAMU RETURNED FROM WORK...
...HE FOUND A BAG OF COINS ON THE DOOR STEP. WE COUNTED THE COINS. THERE WERE NINETY-NINE RUPEES. WE WISHED THERE HAD BEEN A HUNDRED RUPEES. SO DAMU ADDED ONE RUPEE OUT OF HIS DAY'S EARNINGS AND MADE IT A HUNDRED...
...I HAD TO MANAGE WITH THE HALF RUPEE LEFT. NEXT DAY DAMU SAID WE MUST SAVE AND MAKE OUR HUNDRED RUPEES GROW TO TWO HUNDRED...
...NOW HE PUTS ASIDE ONE RUPEE DAILY AND WE SURVIVE ON HALF A RUPEE.
THE MAGIC OF NINETY-NINE! NOW I UNDERSTAND. POOR CHEERU! POOR DAMU!
END.



Story: Arati Soparkar
Illustrations: Vjanta Guhathakurta

SACHIN sat on the sandy beach and looked up at the two towers of the lighthouse. Waves washed up on the rocks not far from where he sat. Sachin's father was the lighthouse keeper there. In those days, before the age of electricity, ships depended on lighthouses with lighted lamps to guide them to safety.

Sachin was nine years old. Every evening, after school, he helped his father take care of the lighthouse. Together they made many trips up and down the winding staircase, doing chores. There were a number of other buildings around—the boathouse, the fuel house and the barn. It was hard work maintaining everything.

Sachin loved to work in the lighthouse the best. The lighthouse with its twin towers used wick lamps as sources of light. There were big reflectors behind the lamps to increase their brightness. Sachin loved to polish them. He and his father trimmed the wicks, and cleaned the lamps and filled them with oil. Sachin took his job very

seriously. He even cleaned the soot off the tower windows.

"Will the lights burn all night long, Father?" Sachin asked one day, as his father began lighting the lamps.

"Yes," his father answered with a smile.

Sachin loved to watch the golden glow that engulfed the lighthouse when the lamps were lit. There was something magical about it. He asked a lot of questions about the lighthouse, and his father taught him everything he knew while they worked and watched the ships sail safely by. The twin towers of the lighthouse looked like giant lanterns.

"Our lighthouse has warned sailors of dangerous rocks and rough waters for many years," his father told him.

"I am so glad we have this job," said Sachin. "It would be horrible if a ship got wrecked on those dangerous rocks at night."

After lighting the lamps, Sachin and his father walked the short distance to the comforting warmth of their home, a little red brick house near the lighthouse towers.

"Dinner is served," greeted Sachin's mother while she bustled around in the cosy kitchen.

His little sister, Saroj, ran to him.

How many ships did you save today?" she asked excitedly.

"Now, let me see," Sachin started counting on his fingers. "Maybe about twenty!" he joked, his eyes twinkling. He spent the rest of the evening telling his sister about strange ships that seemed to disappear into the fog. He had a vivid imagination!

One day Sachin's mother had to leave to visit his grandmother who was sick. Saroj went with her too. Sachin stayed back to help his father.

"Come back soon!" Sachin called out, as he waved to the ferry carrying his mother and Saroj.

"Take care of yourselves!" shouted his mother above the roar of the waves.

Sachin played on the beach for a long time that day. That afternoon, the sky turned grey. As evening approached, the wind picked up speed. A tropical storm was brewing!

"Stay in the house," Sachin's father told him. "I have to go to the beach to make sure our boat is anchored safely."

Sachin waited patiently for his father to return. It was raining heavily by now. Father should be home by now, he thought anxiously. Could something have happened to him? In a flash, Sachin was out of the house and running down the path. He looked up and down the beach. There was no sign of his father.



"Father, where are you?" shouted Sachin above the howling wind, his heart racing.

"Over here," came the reply.

Sachin ran in the direction of the voice. His father had fallen and sprained his ankle badly!

Slowly, with Sachin's help, his father managed to reach home. They were glad to feel the warmth indoors. The storm outside was a little frightening.

"I have to get to the lighthouse soon," his father told him. "The lamps must be lit!"

"But, Father, how will you climb the steep steps to the lighthouse towers?" Sachin said. "Your ankle looks swollen. Please allow me to light the lamps tonight." He had watched his father work so

many times. He would know exactly what to do. Sachin's father looked out of the window. Lightning flashed and briefly he was able to see the lighthouse far away—unlit and cold. It had to be lit! How would his little boy brave the fierce storm and carry out the daunting task alone?

Precious time was passing. Sachin's father attempted to get up to try and see if he could make it to the door. His foot hurt so badly, he was unable to even take a few steps.

"Please, Father," said Sachin once more, "trust me to light the lamps." The little boy looked out of the window. "I'm not afraid of the storm," he said bravely.

"All right," his father agreed, knowing how important the task was, "but be very careful."

Sachin set out, his heart pounding. 'I must be brave,' he thought, as he stepped out, pretending not to notice the storm! The wind and rain whipped his face. In the glow of his lantern, he made his way to the lighthouse. Huge waves crashed on to the shore. The thought of a helpless ship crashing on the rocks made him walk a little faster.

He paused when he reached the winding steps leading to the twin towers, and looked up. What if he was not able to light the lamps?

Brushing aside his fears, Sachin raced up the steep steps to one of the towers. With trembling hands, he set to work. The howling wind outside did not bother him anymore. He knew exactly what to do. He had watched his father work many times.

Soon all the lamps were brightly lit in one tower. Sachin raced to the second tower.

"This is easier than I thought," Sachin said to himself, as he finished lighting all the lamps.

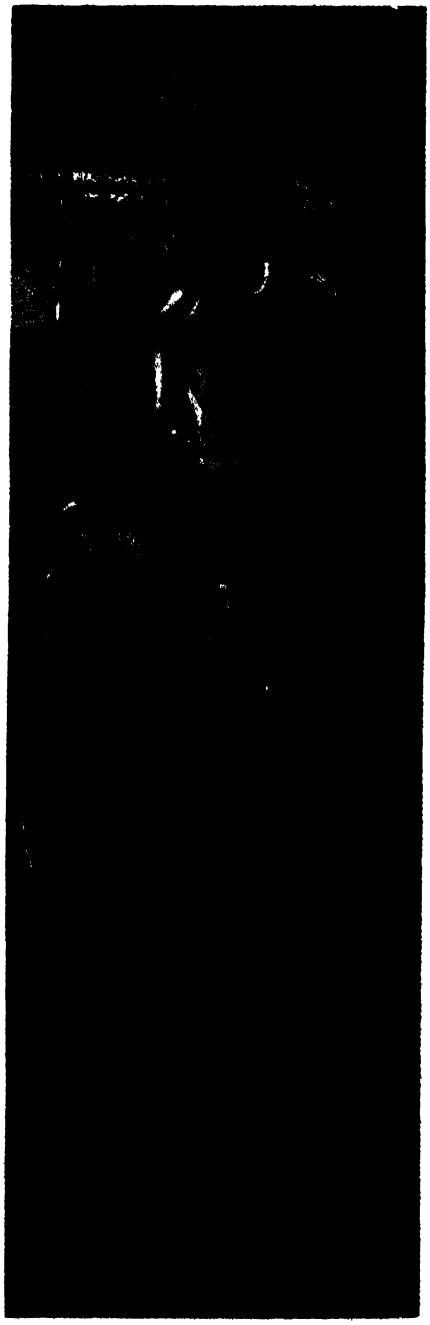
Back home, Sachin's father saw the twin towers light up, and his heart glowed with pride.

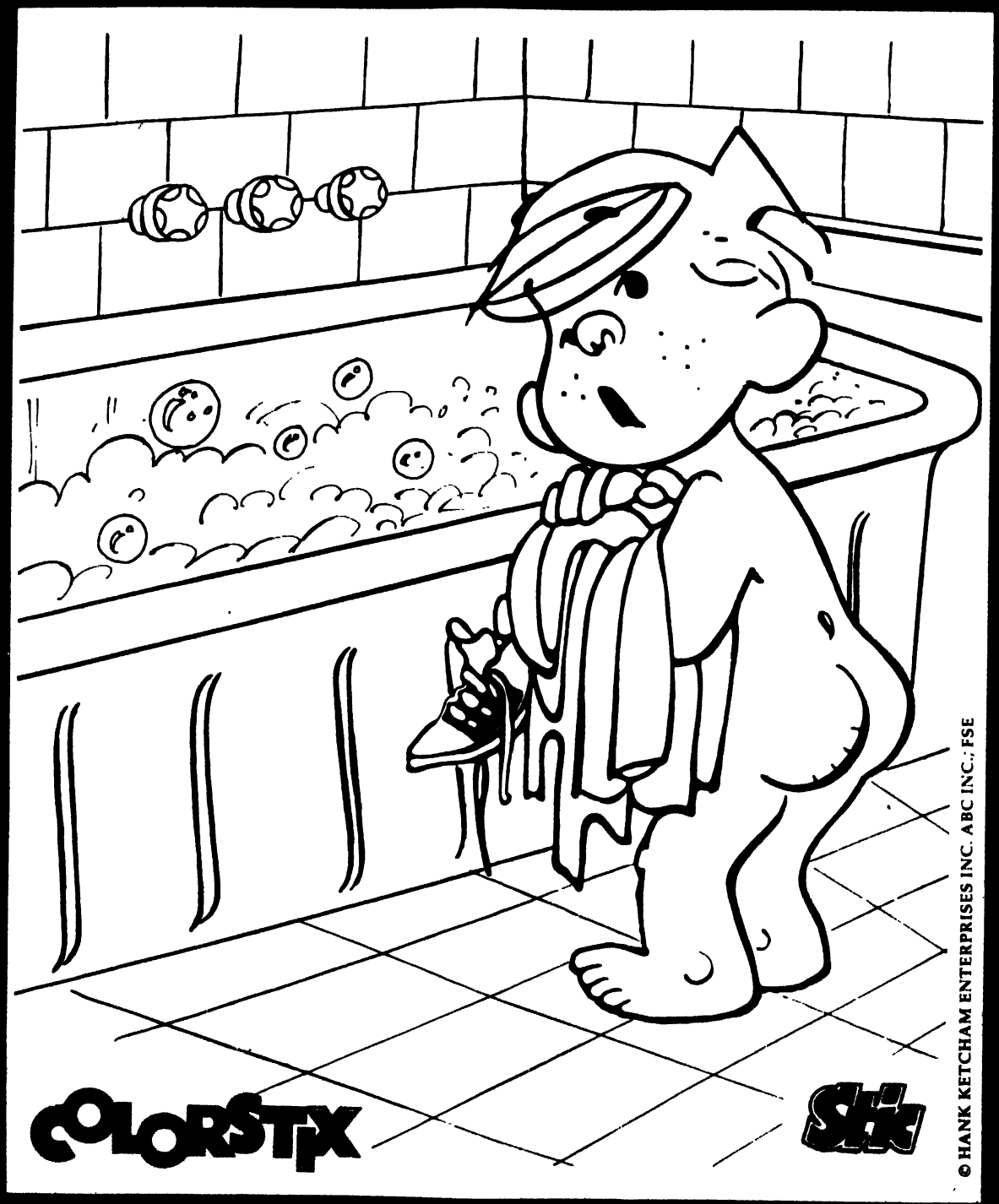
Sachin sat alone in the lighthouse for a while. The ships would be safe that night. Looking down at the giant waves crashing onto the treacherous rocks, he knew what he wanted to be when he grew up—a lighthouse keeper like his father!

By the next day, the storm had passed. Sachin waited eagerly for his mother and Saroj to return. When they arrived, he could hardly wait to tell them about the events of the previous night. Now he had a true adventure story to tell Saroj!

Many years later, Sachin sat once again on the same sandy beach and looked up at the two lighthouse towers. He was now the lighthouse keeper himself, but his task was very different from that of his father. Gone were the days of lighting the oil lamps every evening. Electricity and radar hummed through the twin towers and alerted ships of unseen dangers.

Every evening, Sachin would tell his children many stories. The majestic lighthouse had stood through many storms, its twin beacons of light reminding him of the past. His best story, of course, was of that stormy night when ships sailed safely by with the help of his guiding light!




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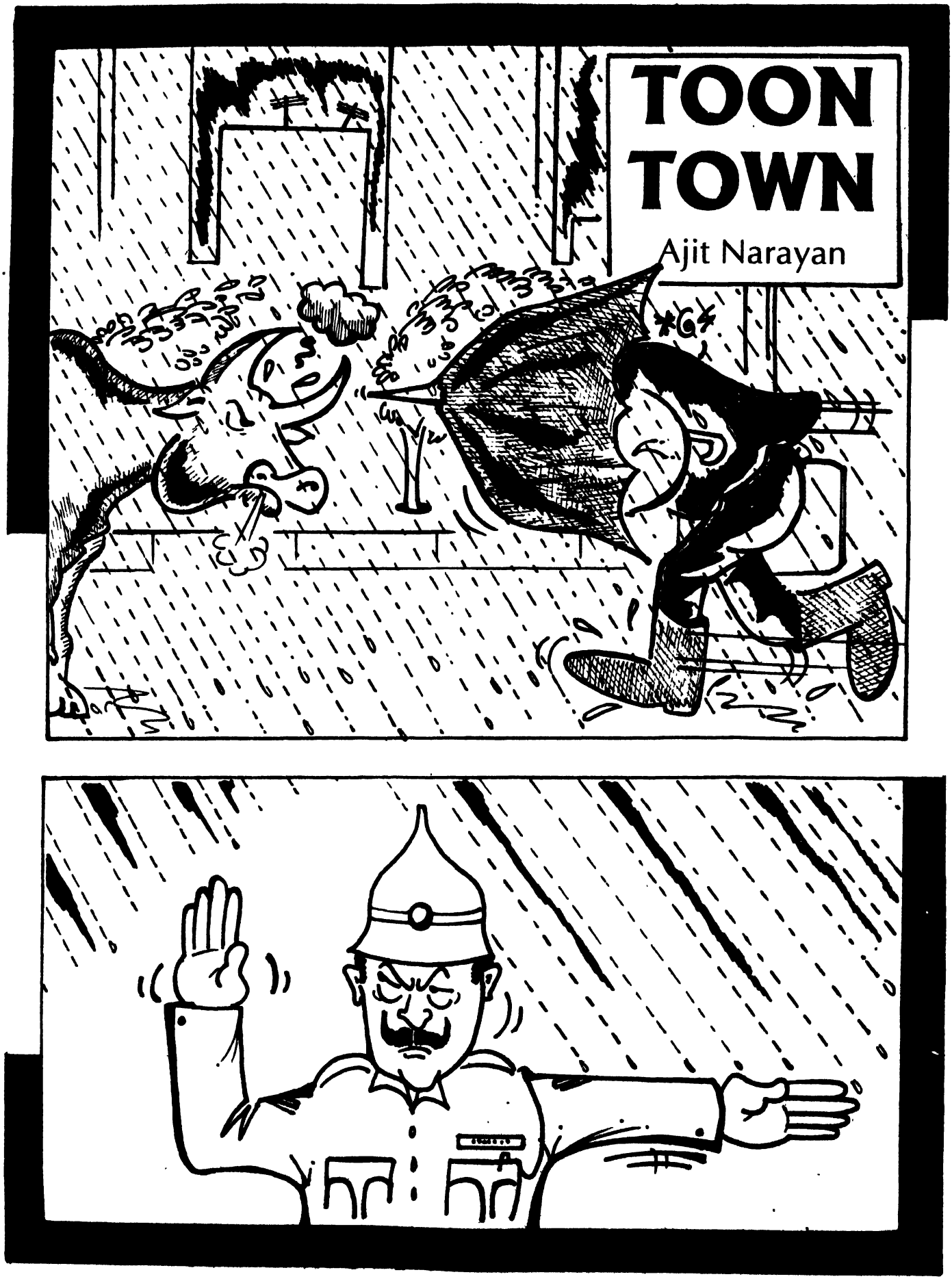
Here's a quiz to perk you up. Send in your entries and if your answers are correct, you may win one of our *two prizes—of Rs. 100/- each.* Each entry must be accompanied by your subscription number or with a cheque for a year's subscription. Participants must be 16 years old or younger. Include your name, age, address and the name of your school. Last date for receiving entries: *August 1, 1997.* You could also fax your entries to us at 11-3721090.

By Mudita Luthra

1. What is the internationally accepted borderline between India and China on India's north-east called?
2. Hippopotamus, the male of which species weighs about five tons, is related to a well known animal. Which animal?
3. What is the duration of a normal hockey match?
4. Which is the most treeless state in India?
5. Which was the first direct translation of a Sanskrit work into English?
6. What is serendipity?
7. Who painted 'The Last Supper'?
8. Which animal is in the logo of the World Wide Fund for Nature?
9. Who was given the first Sahitya Akademi Award in English?
10. Who was the first Indian woman to reach the final of an Olympic event?
11. What is a male honey bee called?
12. What 'M' is a fish that climbs trees?
13. Where is Asia's largest slum located?
14. Which was the year man first set foot on the moon?
15. Which is the fastest train in India?
16. What is Bonsai?
17. What is xenophobia?
18. Which day is observed as World Environment Day?
19. Over how many Indian states is the Thar Desert spread?
20. Which was the first newspaper in India?

***CW Bonanza!* At the end of twelve issues, there will be a Special Bumper Prize drawn by lot from among the 24 winners of the year. So come on, folks! Get cracking!**

Congratulations! Geeta Batra, Baroda and Shreya Gupta, Chandigarh—winners of Bingo (May 1997)!


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READER'S CHOICE

The Little Prince

By Reader of the month: Ritambra Rana

ANTOINE De Saint-Exupery in *The Little Prince* reaches out to the child in each one of us. The dedication itself sets the tone of the book:

"To Leon Werth

"I ask the indulgence of the children who may read this book for dedicating it to a grown-up. I have a serious reason; he is the best friend I have in the world. I have another reason: this grown-up understands everything, even books about children. I have a third reason: he lives in France where he is hungry and cold. He needs cheering up. If all these reasons are not enough, I will dedicate the book to the child from whom this grown-up grew. All grown-ups were once children—although few of them remember it. And so I correct my dedication:

"To Leon Werth

"When he was a little boy."

The narrator, now a grown-up himself, relates a childhood incident, "Once when I was six years old I saw a magnificent picture in a book, called *True Stories from Nature...* In the book it said: 'Boa constrictors swallow their prey whole, without chewing it. After that they are not able to move, and they sleep through the six months that they need for digestion.' " This set him thinking and then he made his first drawing.

He shows his 'masterpiece' to grown-ups and asked them "...whether the drawing frightened them.

"But they answered, 'Frighten? Why should any one be frightened by a hat?' " Unfortunately it was not a hat. "It was a picture of a boa constrictor digesting an elephant. But since the grown-ups were unable to understand it, I made another drawing."

"The grown-ups' response, this time, was to advise me to lay aside my drawings of boa constrictors, whether from the inside or the outside and devote myself instead to geography, history, arithmetic and grammar. That is why, at the age of six, I gave up what might have been a magnificent career as a painter..."

On growing up he chooses to become a pilot. But the child in him still lives on. "I have lived a great deal among grown-ups. I have seen them intimately, close at hand. And that hasn't much improved my opinion of them."

He uses his drawings to experiment on adults to see "if this was a person of true understanding". Alas! all the adults failed because they see a hat instead of a boa constrictor. So "I would bring myself down to his level. I would talk to him about bridge, and golf, and politics, and neckties. And the grown-up would be greatly pleased to have met such a sensible man". Gradually he gives up hope. "So I lived my life alone, without anyone that I could really talk to" until one day his plane crashes in the Sahara desert.

The next morning he is awakened by "an odd little voice. It said, 'If you please—draw me a sheep'." Instead of a sheep he draws the boa constrictor from the outside. He is astounded when the little fellow says, " 'No, no, no! I do not want an elephant inside a boa constrictor'..."

This voice belongs to a prince from a distant tiny

planet ("scarcely any larger than a house") which he has escaped from because of a discord between him and a flower.

Finally the narrator finds someone who understands the child in him. They soon become good friends and with each passing day we learn a little more about the prince and his journey to the earth.

On the way to the earth the prince visited many planets and saw the grown-ups living on them, and came to the conclusion that "grown-ups are certainly very, very odd".

On one of the planets he meets a tippler who drinks to forget that he is ashamed. "Ashamed of what?" asks the little prince.

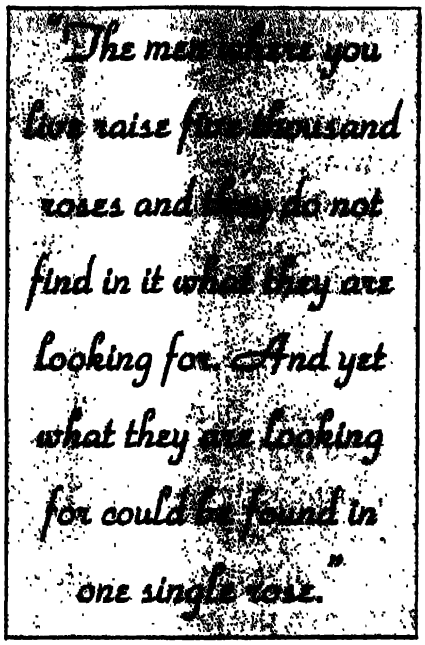
"Ashamed of drinking!" says the tippler leaving the little prince very puzzled, but he puts it dawn to normal adult behaviour.

On another planet he meets a businessman who spends all day "concerned with matters of consequence," that is counting all the stars he owns. The little prince asks him, "And what good does it do you to own the stars?" The businessman replies, "It does me the good of making me rich."

The prince then asks, "And what do you do with them?"

"I administer them," replies the businessman. "I count them and recount them..."

"On matters of consequence the little prince had ideas which were very different from those of grown-ups." He tells the businessman about his planet. "I myself own a flower which I water every day. I own three volcanoes, which I clean out every week. It is of some use to my volcanoes, and it is of some use to my flower, that I own



them. But you are of no use to the stars..." To this the businessman has nothing to say.

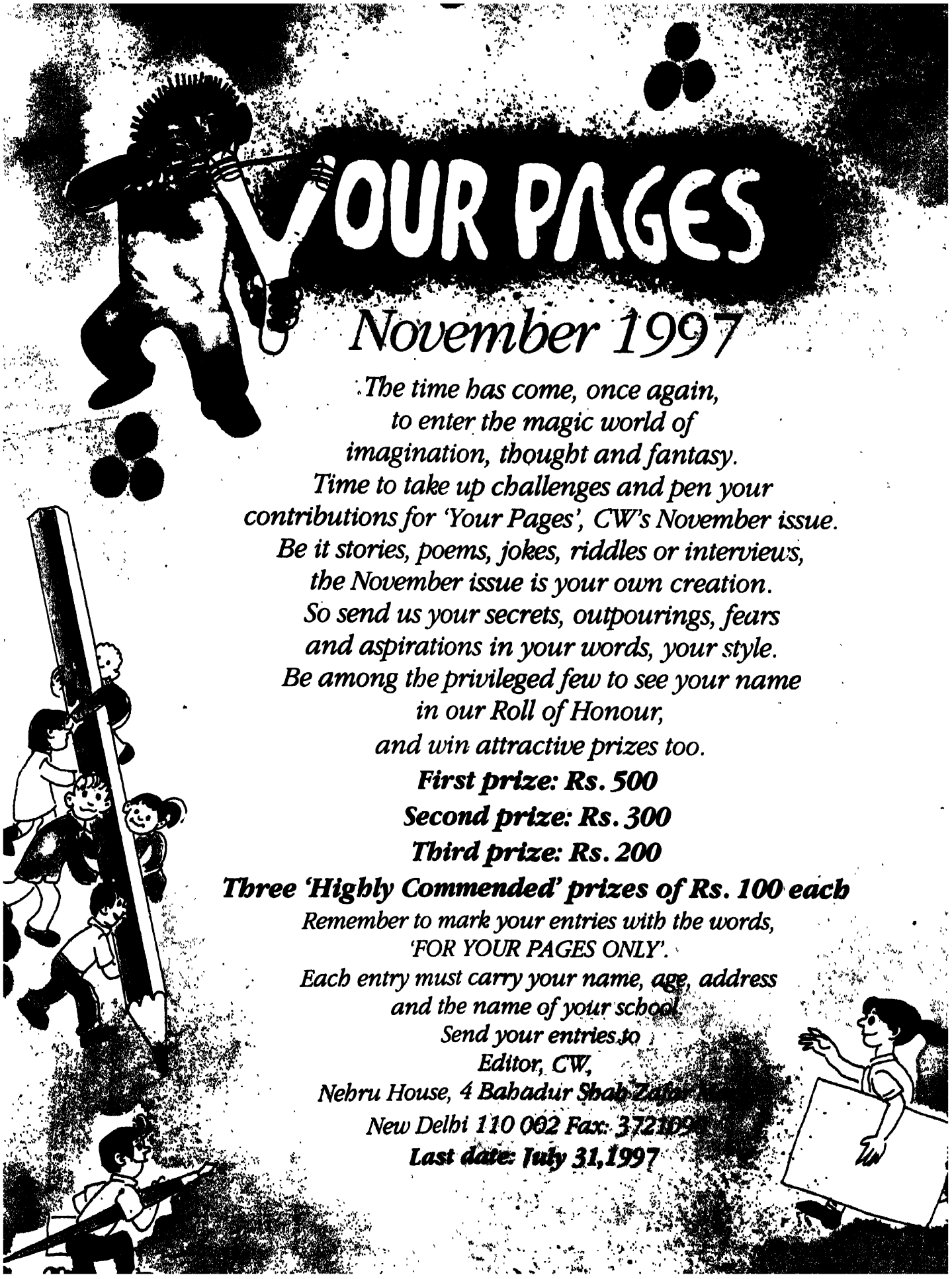
Finally the little prince reaches Earth. After walking for a long time he reaches a garden where he sees thousands of flowers just like the flower on his planet. "And he was overcome with sadness. This flower had told him that she was the only one of her kind in all the universe..."

"I thought that I was rich, with a flower that was unique in all the world; and all I had was a common rose..." But he soon realises the importance of his rose after meeting a fox which he tames.

"You are not at all like my rose," he says to the roses in the garden. "You are like my fox when I first knew him. He was only a fox like a hundred thousand other foxes. But I have made him my friend, and now he is unique in all the world."

"You are beautiful, but you are empty," he went on. "One could not die for you. To be sure, an ordinary passerby would think that my rose looked just like you—the rose that belongs to me. But in herself alone she is more important than all the hundreds of you other roses: because it is she that I have watered... because it is she that I have sheltered behind the screen; because it is for her that I have killed the caterpillars... because it is she that I have listened to, when she grumbled, or boasted, or even sometimes when she said nothing. Because she is *my* rose."

On realising the importance of his rose and how much the rose needs him, the prince decides to go back to his planet. By now he has reached the conclusion that the grown-ups on Earth are same as grown-ups everywhere. Their ideas of "matters of consequence" are very different from his. Before leaving he



November 1997

The time has come, once again,
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Be it stories, poems, jokes, riddles or interviews,
the November issue is your own creation.
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Each entry must carry your name, age, address
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Send your entries to
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Nehru House, 4 Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg,
New Delhi 110 002 Fax: 3721098

Last date: July 31,1997

tells the narrator, "The men where you live raise five thousand roses and they do not find in it what they are looking for. And yet what they are looking for could be found in one single rose."

And so the narrator loses his only true friend: "Six years have already passed since my friend went away from me, with his sheep. If I try to describe him here it is to make sure that I shall not forget him. To forget a friend is sad. Not everyone has had a friend. And if I forget him I may become like the grown-ups who are no longer interested in anything but figures..."

Without preaching or moralising, the little prince conveys his message—stop looking at the world through the jaded eyes of an adult but see it through the eyes of a child, because only then will you stop seeing the hat and start seeing "a boa constrictor who has swallowed an elephant".



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RULES

1. The competition is open to children all over the world. They should have been born on or after January 1, 1982.
2. *There is no entry fee.*
3. Competitors are free to choose the theme/subject they are interested in, or like most, for their paintings/drawings/writings.
4. Each entry should be certified by the parent/guardian/teacher as the original, unaided work of the competitor done during 1997. Entries should be an individual effort and NOT a combined work.
5. Every entry should carry the following information in English and in BLOCK LETTERS, at the back of the painting/drawing, or at the end of the written work: *' First name ' Middle name ' Surname ' Boy or Girl ' Date of Birth ' Nationality ' Full postal address ' Subject/title of the entry*
6. No entry will be returned. The copyright of all entries will rest with Shankar's International Children's Competition.
7. All packets should be pre-paid/adequately stamped and mailed directly to reach:
   Shankar's International Children's Competition
   Nehru House
   4 Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg
   New Delhi-110002
8. Entries sent by air cargo will not be accepted.
9. The last date for receipt of entries is *October 31, 1997*

PAINTINGS/DRAWINGS

10. The drawings can be in any medium.
11. The size of each entry should NOT be less than 30 x 40 cm in size.
12. A competitor may submit upto 6 entries. They should NOT be mounted/framed.

WRITTEN WORK

13. Only entries in ENGLISH will be considered. Translations from other languages do not qualify for the competition.
14. Entries may be in the form of poems, plays, short stories, essays, descriptive writing, and the like.
15. A competitor may submit upto 6 entries. They should be in a neat handwriting or typed.

PRIZES

16. The entries will be judged by the organizers with the help of a jury. The judges' decision will be final.
17. The following prizes are offered:
    i. The President of India's Gold Medal for the best painting/drawing.
    ii. The Shankar's Award for the best written work.
    iii. 24 Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Gold Medals for the next best paintings/drawings/written work.
    iv. About 400 Silver Medals and 400 prizes.
    v. Certificates of Merit to deserving entries.
18. Results will be announced in July 1998. Prizewinners will be informed individually by post.
19. The best entries will be published in Shankar's *Children's Art Number*, Volume 49. Selected entries will also appear in CW—*Children's World.*

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CHILDREN'S WORLD

A CHILD'S BEST FRIEND

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Cover design: Ajanta Guhathakurta

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Dear Readers,

Storms, floods, earthquakes, man-made disasters all teach us seldom-to-be-forgotten lessons They are but furies that come, leave their mark and go

The lessons one learns from teachers however, go beyond the pages of text books and confines of school bags As we gain height and wisdom, the memory of some interactions with our teachers grow and nestle in our minds and become pleasant to recall Other incidents just lie dormant in some forgotten, dusty corridor of the mind, till one fine day you wake up to the fact "But for that teacher, maybe I would not be who I am today" Owing your teacher that feeling is one of the best tributes you can pay him/her In turn, it makes you a suitable candidate to do for somebody what your teacher did for you It does not matter if you are not within a classroom

With the country celebrating its fiftieth year of independence, there are bound to be thousands and thousands of adults in India who would like nothing better than to celebrate Teacher's Day—Dr S Radhakrishnan's birthday—by going back to school or college for just that one day Only to be with that one teacher who made them what they are

Lucky are those who can make the most of Teacher's Day, as students

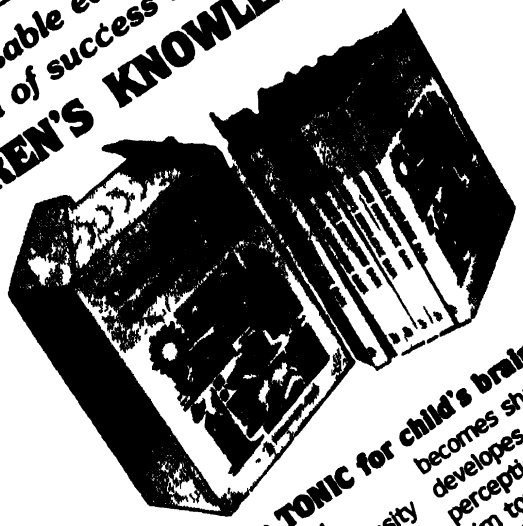
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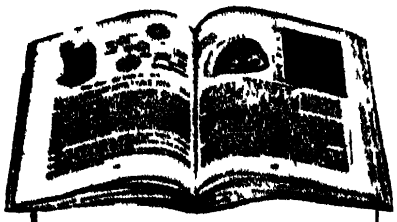
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PERKY'S A LETTER TO YOU

My dear sharps and sharks,

Sometimes in the world wanderings of my mind, I think about sharpeners. Do you think about them too? If you don't, you should. I mean, just imagine their lives, their poor, neglected lives. There they are, lying in a corner of your geometry box, pencil box or whatever, lying there forgotten, uncared for, unpraised. I mean, sharpeners really ought to feel very sad. Pens, pencils, erasers, they all lead very big lives. Busy lives. The pens are writing busily, importantly, the pencils are drawing and sketching and making rude faces, and the erasers come from all sides and sweep up the mess and make the page clean again.

But sharpeners! Poor sharpeners! They are seldom busy. Once in a while, they are asked to come out and twist a pencil around and then—out, over—the sharpener is put into the box again. And forgotten, till the pencil needs a new point and another twisting of its head.

But like a lot of other important things, the sharpener is really missed when it is missing. That's really strange, isn't it? To miss something when it is not around? I mean not just miss seeing it but also, actually miss it, if you know what I mean.

Anyway, whether you know what I mean or not, it happened to me. The missing sharpener, I mean. It happened to me. You see, my sharpener was always there, in the top right corner of my pencil box and then suddenly, it wasn't there. Not there, if you know what I mean.



And there I was, with a whole geography map to draw and some acute triangles and part of the bone of a whale and no sharp pencils! And no sharpeners!

Oh! The world shook, I tell you. I threw out all the books from my bag and pulled out the things from my drawer. No sharpener! Not a wink of one! I ran to my cupboard and brought out handsful of shirts,



trousers, socks, hankies, belts, more socks, more hankies. Still no sharpener! And then I flung myself on the floor and yelled, "My sharpener! My sharpener."

I admit it looked exactly as if I had gone totally mad. In fact, that's what my mother said when she barged into my room. "Perky!" she said, "Have you gone totally mad?"

For there I was half sitting, half lying down on a heap of shirts, trousers, belts, hankies, which were on top of pillows, sheets which were lying across books, paper, erasers, sharpeners—Sharpeners! A sharpener! My sharpener!

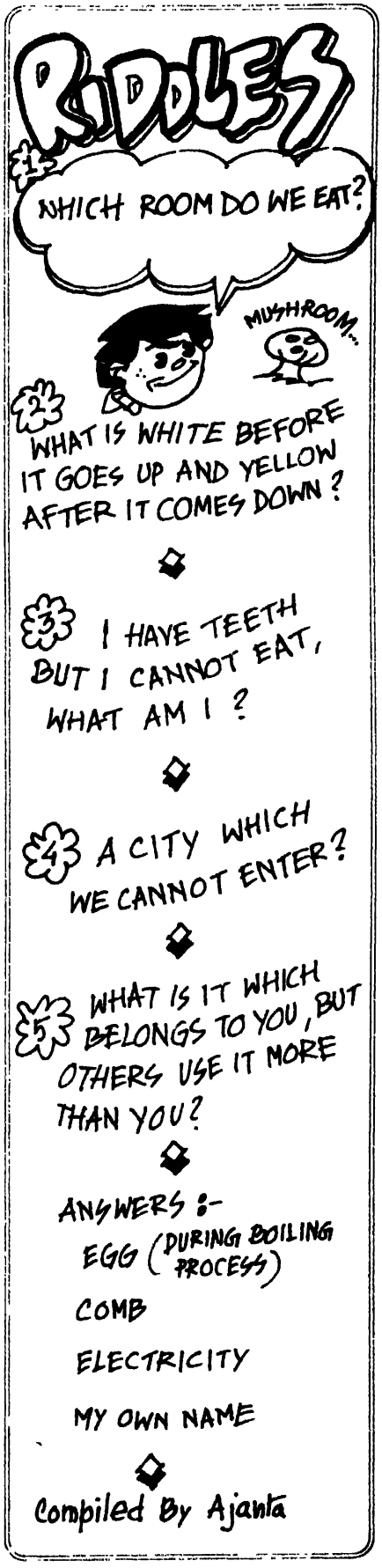
"Oh, it's there! See it's there!" I shouted and jumped up and danced on top of...

"Perky!" my mother yelled in the middle of my dance and my description. "Stop that and clean up your room! At once! And I don't want to hear another word!" As if I had said even half a word.

But there you are. That's what mothers are. And I had to clean up my room, sob, put everything away, sob, and yes, sob, my sharpener is missing again. Yes, missing again.

Hey! Do you think of sharpeners?

Yours with a question
Perky



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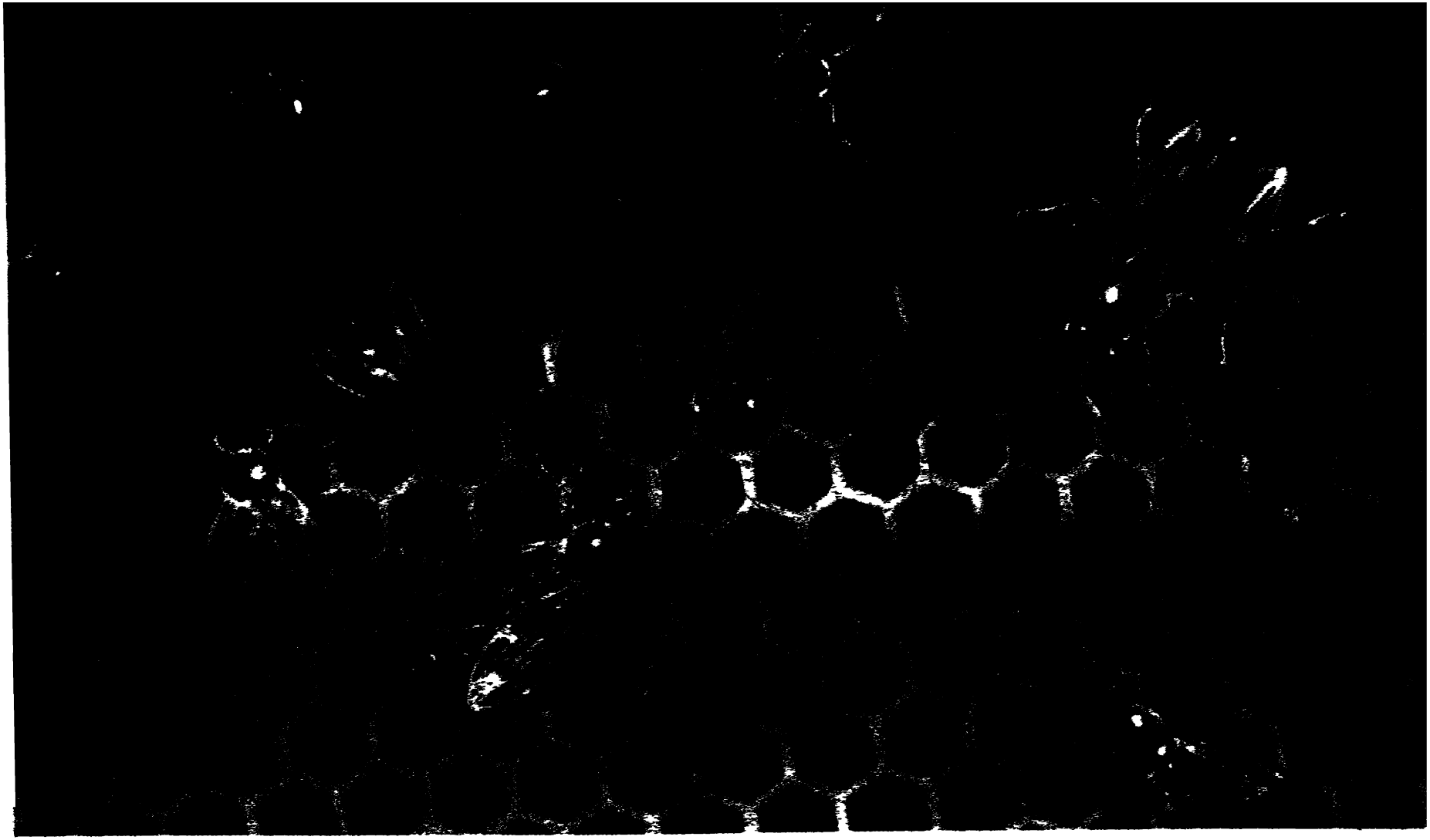
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POEMS FROM JAPAN





Illustrations : Ajanta Guhathakurta

For most of us, kings and queens, princesses and princes, emperors and empresses belong to fairy tale books and do some of the most wonderful things within the pages of a story. Today's kings and queens, princesses and princes, emperors and empresses are slightly different, though they continue to do some very wonderful things.

Her Majesty, Empress Michiko of Japan for example—she has put together some very popular poems by Japanese poet, Michio Mado, in English, so that children of the world can enjoy them too.

We bring you two of the most popular of these poems.

These poems are from 'The Animals', a collection of poems originally written by Michio Mado in Japanese, selected and translated by the Empress Michiko of Japan and illustrated by Anna Mitsumasa, published by Suemori Books Publishing Co. Ltd. in Japan and Margaret M. McElderry Books in America.

Mado is the winner of the 1994 Hans Christian Andersen Award for Writing. The award is called the Nobel prize in Children's Literature. The poem 'Little Elephant' is so popular that Japanese children sing it all the time.



SLEEP

At night,
When quietly
The two tiny windows of my body
Lower their blinds,

The two tiny windows
Of all creatures of all kinds,
Living in the sky,
The sea, and on land,
Quietly
Lower their blinds, too,

So as not to cause
A single dream

To be mixed
With any other.

Little Elephant

"Little elephant
Little elephant,
What a long nose you have."
"Sure it's long.
So is my mommy's."

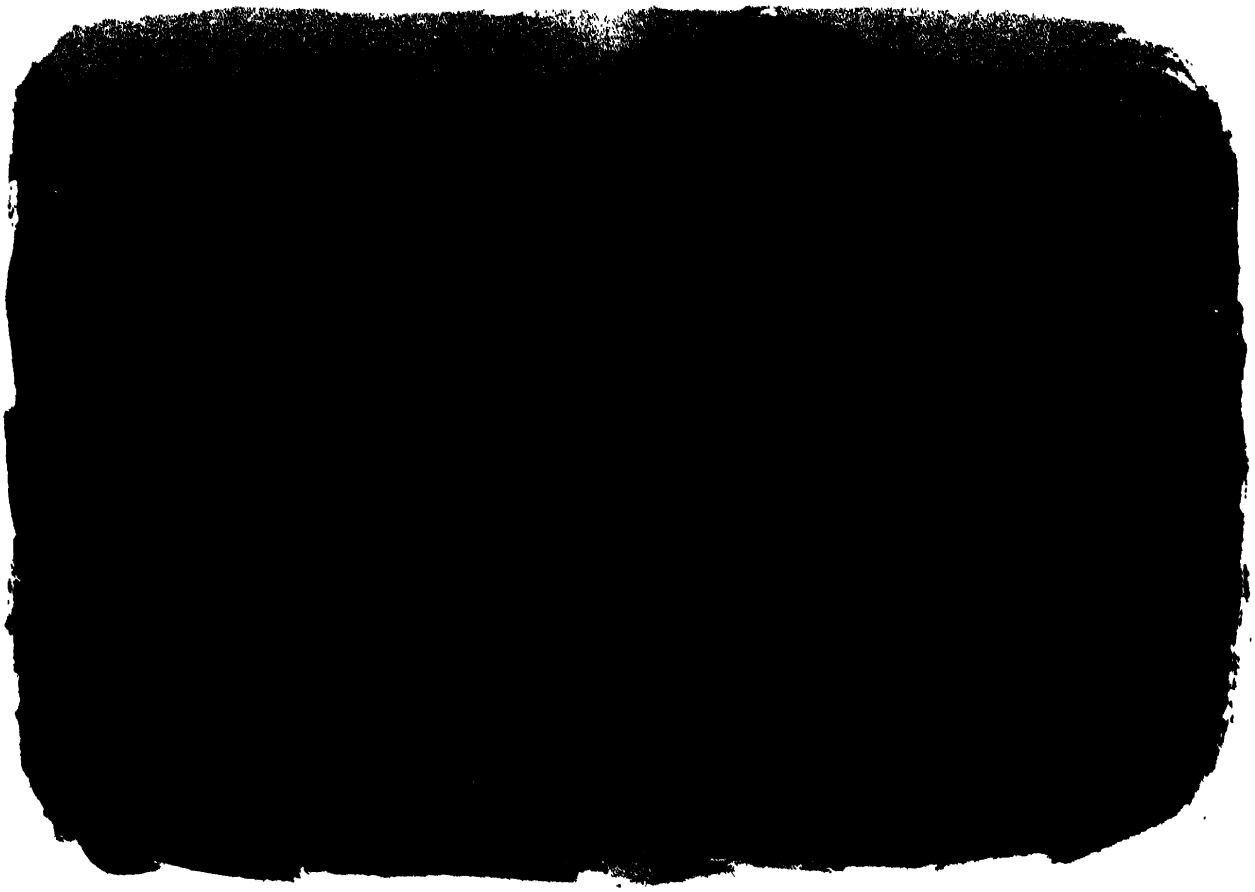
"Little elephant,
Little elephant,
Tell me who you like."
"I like mommy
I like her the most."



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GOING PLACES

KANGRA VALLEY



Text : Brinda Gill
Transparency : Satyajit Gill

LESSER known than the well-beaten destinations of Shimla, Kullu and Manali in Himachal Pradesh is the picturesque Kangra Valley with a haunting mellow beauty. A sense of space and quiet echoes across the valley with its rolling hills, tea gardens, streams, terraced fields, orchards, forests of pine, pastures crossed by snow-fed streams. The Dhauladhar or white mountain range, stretches from the north-west to the south-east regions of the state majestically watching over the many beautiful lower mountains and valleys. Its steep and precipitous southern front face overlooks the Kangra Valley. The lower slopes there are covered with forests of pine and oak; some of the higher, rugged peaks are shielded with snow while those that are too steep to hold snow are sheer, exposed granite.

In a typical picture postcard view below the Dhauladhar in the foreground are seen terraced fields, covered with dark and light green cultivated strips. Dramatically imposing by day, the mountains soften in the evenings as the setting sun dissolves the summits into gold, then pink and grey. In the stillness of the night the moon splashes its light on the landscape. Rivers and streams catch the light and shine like silver ribbons in the darkness, creating a magical ambience as the valley sleeps silently—a perfect destination for people from cities wanting to escape the heat, noise and rush of towns in the plains.

The most popular town here is Dharamsala, also the district headquarters of Kangra and its most popular town. Dharamsala sprawls along a spur of the Dhauladhar range and has subsequently developed into distinct areas. The higher and lower towns have about 600 m between them. The Dharamsala bazaar stands at about 1200 m while Macleodganj, named after Sir Allan Mcleod, once Governor of the Punjab, is at 1800 m, dominated by the Dhauladhar. Not only do the areas have different altitudes and thus temperatures, but also a distinct ambience.

The lower areas bustle with commercial activity; some pockets are still very British where cottages with flowering gardens nestle in the hillsides or the stone church of St. John with its lovely stained glass windows stands surrounded by deodars, and the memorial obelisk built over the body of the British Viceroy Lord Elgin who died here in 1863.

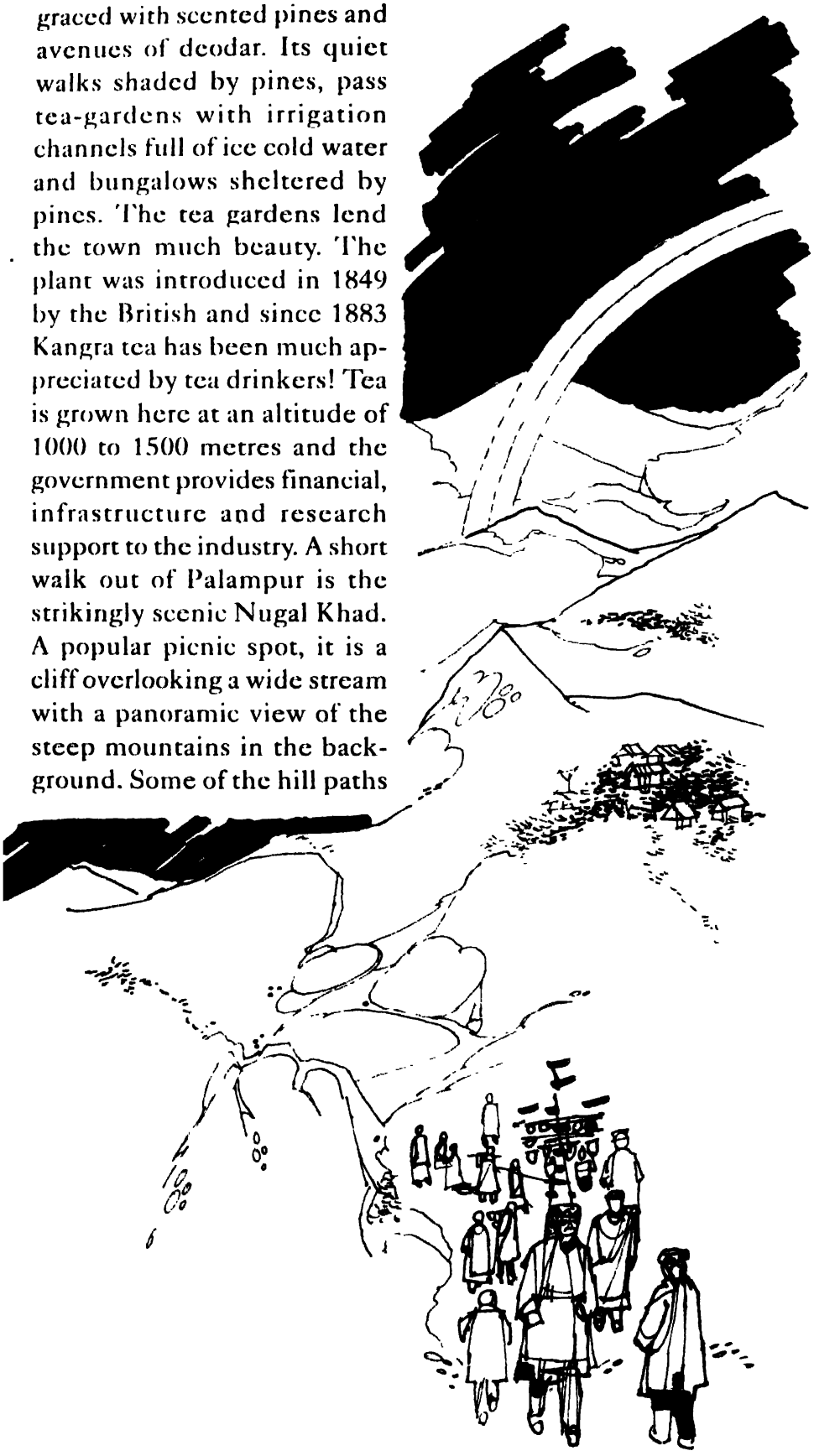
The higher reaches have a Tibetan flavour, for the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of the Tibetans, resides at Macleodganj. The Namgyal Monastery with rows of prayer wheels on its outer walls and beautiful statues of the Buddha within is located here. The School of Tibetan Studies, the Tibetan Institute for Performing Arts, a handicrafts centre and the Tibetan bazaar complete the ambience giving McLeodganj the title of 'Little Lhasa'! The bazaar has a range of Tibetan crafts and books on Tibetan culture.

There are many lovely day treks from Dharamsala to scenic picnic spots and shrines as well as excursions to temples like the cave temple at Trilokpur, the monolithic rock temples at Masrur and the Krishna temple at Nurpur.

Seventeen kilometres from Dharmasala is Kangra town from where museum masterpieces of miniature paintings characterized by a fluid grace originated during 1775-1823. Of interest are the temples and a deserted fort. On the outskirts of the town is the Bajreshwari Temple with its striking white superstructure. Thirty kilometers away is Jwalamukhi, a popular pilgrim centre, where flames of natural gas emanate from a rock. This eternally burning sacred fire is worshipped as a manifestation of the Goddess.

Thirty-five kilometres from Kangra is the beautiful town of Palampur visited by many tourists during the summer. It is

graced with scented pines and avenues of deodar. Its quiet walks shaded by pines, pass tea-gardens with irrigation channels full of ice cold water and bungalows sheltered by pines. The tea gardens lend the town much beauty. The plant was introduced in 1849 by the British and since 1883 Kangra tea has been much appreciated by tea drinkers! Tea is grown here at an altitude of 1000 to 1500 metres and the government provides financial, infrastructure and research support to the industry. A short walk out of Palampur is the strikingly scenic Nugal Khad. A popular picnic spot, it is a cliff overlooking a wide stream with a panoramic view of the steep mountains in the background. Some of the hill paths nearby are frequented by the nomadic shepherds, the Gaddis, who lead their flocks with the seasons, from lower pastures to higher ones after the snow has melted.



A few attractions outside Palampur are Andretta, Baijnath, Bir and Billing. At Andretta, 13 km away is the gallery of the famous painter Sardar Sobha Singh and a pottery centre where you can see some unusual pieces of pottery. At Baij nath 16 km away is an age old pilgrim centre for the revered Shiva temple, built in 804 A.D. here, that enshrines one of the twelve *jyotirlingas* in the country. It is believed that King Ravana invoked Lord Shiva here for the boon of immortality. The temple is full of people and festivities during the annual Shivratri fair. Bir, 35 km away, has hand and para gliding facilities and at Billing, 14 km farther, is another aerosport centre.

Getting there :

- The airport at Gaggla is 13 km from Dharamsala and 37 km from Palampur.
- Pathankot, the nearest main-line railway station, is 85 km away from Dharamsala. The three hour drive from Pathankot can be done by taxi. A narrow gauge train winds its way from Pathankot, through Kangra, past Palampur till Joginder Nagar.



THINK!

Story: Shalan Savur
Illustrations : A.V. Prasanth

VRINDA TEACHER draped her sari like a tent caught in a whirlwind, knotted her hair in a loose bun that looked like it was in eternal danger of slipping down her neck and shoulders, and carried a HUGE pile of books that made you feel you were seeing a walking library. Harum-scarum she was, absent-minded too, lost in a daydream, humming to herself in her pure, clear voice. But she was the most sought-after teacher because she was simply ADORED by her pupils.

Her drama class was such a riot of fun and games, that none of her pupils wanted to go home! On the first day, she beamed at the nervous children and clapped her hands enthusiastically.

"Children!" she announced. "Let us begin by introducing ourselves!" Out popped a large, colourful beach-ball which she handed over to one child, instructing, "Throw it to anybody you wish to, and state your name loudly and clearly as you do."

And the introductions began, "Lata!" "Sadhana!" "Nido!" "Damini!" The ball whizzed to and fro, sometimes missing its target and slipping and falling and bouncing. And the children? They were quite breathless from leaping and laughing, jostling and juggling, chasing and racing! At the end of the session, not only did they know each others' names, they felt truly like an acting crew that had shared a special experience.

Over the next few weeks, she taught them several things. How to pronounce each word clearly: "Say *Never*. Yes, clamp your teeth on your lower lip to emphasise the 'V'. Ne-*V*-er!" How to throw their voice boldly: "As if you are spitting out marbles from your mouth! Go on, open your throats!" How to stretch a word, or lower the voice: "On a da-ark da-ark night, in the da-ark da-ark woods, I saw (pause) a (lower your voice) da-ark da-ark man..." How to express themselves through gestures, eyes and body language: "Square your shoulders, raise your chin! You are a bold, fearless warrior! Stride as you talk! Let your eyes flash with fire! Feel your voice coming up from your stomach! Feel the emotions!"

But, above all, Vrinda T—as they called her—commanded them, "THINK! You are not parrots. Use your intelligence! When you are on stage, if your sword falls from its scabbard, make up your own actions and dialogues to fit that scene. Always, THINK!"

Then, one day, the principals of all the schools asked Vrinda to stage a play. It was to be a grand show for all the parents. Many VIPs (Very Important Persons) would also be invited. The money collected from the sale of tickets would go to an institution for the blind.

So, Vrinda T held rehearsals every day. They were to enact a story called *Kabuliwala* written by the great poet and author, Rabindranath Tagore. And, once again, Vrinda T told her students, "THINK!"

Came the night of the grand



show. Oh, what a buzz of excitement there was! The auditorium was packed. One entire section was specially reserved for the blind students. Our actors looked splendid in their costumes. Sets looked truly life-like. Vrinda T was everywhere. Gone was that dreamy look. Her eagle eyes spotted the tiniest flaw. She checked all the equipment herself—the sound system, the lights, the props...

In one corner, sat the blind musicians. Yes, they were to provide the music—live! They were ready with their *tablas*, *sitar*, harmonium, *veena*... They waited...

"Ladies and gentlemen!" Vrinda T's voice rang through the microphone. "Thank you for coming!" Then, after stating the purpose of the show and introducing each artiste, she announced, "And now, we present you Rabindranath Tagore's *Kabuliwala*!"

The band struck its first note. The curtains slowly slid to the sides to reveal the scene onstage. The lights brig ened, spotlighting the acto But, just as the show w about to begin, guess wl happened?

All the lights went out! T air-conditioner in the audi rium hummed into silen The entire city was in to darkness due to a major el tricity failure! Oh, what a d aster!

"Oh no," groaned eve body. The principals w deeply distressed. After all, much effort had gone into t

show. Why hadn't they thought of keeping a generator as a stand-by? But, who would have thought this would happen?

The audience stirred restlessly. Besides, they were in pitch darkness. Each one began to rise from his or her seat, planning to grope their way towards the exit.

But Vrinda T's mind was already struck by a wonderful idea. She knew what she had to do. Her voice boomed out in the darkness.

"Ladies and gentlemen, Please do not leave your seats! Remember, this show is being held for our brothers and sisters who cannot see. They have never allowed the darkness they live in to defeat them! They persevere, they overcome, they win! Are we going to allow a mere electricity failure to stop us? Not in a million years! The show must go on! The doors will be opened for ventilation. Please use your brochures to fan yourselves! And, meanwhile, I request your patience. Just sit back, relax and imagine you are at home listening to your radio!" Fully tuned to Vrinda T's brainwave, the orchestra spiritedly struck up a lively tune.

Surprised at the turn of events, the audience sank back into its seat and waited. While the principals and teachers threw open the doors,



Vrinda T gathered her talented crew around her and whispered, "Now, remember, the microphones are not functioning, so throw your voices! Pronounce each word clearly. Also, the audience cannot see you, so add detailed descriptions to your dialogues! THINK! Think of it as a play being performed on the radio! THINK!"

"Yes, ma'am!" chorused the actors, their brains already buzzing with ideas. What a challenge they faced! And, would you believe it, not one of them was nervous! They knew Vrinda T would guide them through any difficulty. Each one stepped on stage...

The orchestra allowed its notes to fade and by improvising, gradually began the theme-composition without a break! And, each actor began to speak. There was no hesitation, or faltering. Yes, Vrinda T's training certainly stood them in good stead.

The character and personality of the *Kabuliwala* shone though their dialogues. As did the bustling market-place, the sound of a bull bellowing, the train going 'clackety-clack' on the tracks. Nothing was left out of this great canvas of performance—the pink flush of the dawn seen through the trembling leaves of the coconut trees, the grass glistening with dewdrops... And, the music wove it all together into a smooth picture of harmony.

The audience sat through those two hours, listening in spellbound silence. No doubt, had the great poet Tagore been there himself, he would have

applauded this heroic effort and said that he could *"feel the unseen messages of Nature that are always travelling through space, floating in the air, shimmering in the sky, tingling in the roots of the grass under the earth."*

At the end of the play, there was a hushed silence... Then, the audience stood up as one body and began to clap. How they cheered! As if in answer to their applause, the lights suddenly flashed on, revealing their moved faces, tears streaming down their cheeks...

As the musicians and actors bowed, there began a chant. "Vr-inda! Vr-inda!" So, Vrinda T came onstage and bowed. What a thunderous applause she received! Everybody agreed that the show was a complete success. It was talked about for months as "an unforgettable experience". And all because Vrinda Teacher had opened the eyes of her pupils and taught them to "THINK!"



I like a green place...

Silika Mahapatra (10)
Illustrations : A.V. Prasanth

I like a green place
Where in between the flowers I can race.

A house of my own
and where there are flowers at dawn.

Where all around there are trees
and there is the buzzing of bees.

Where a stream races down
and where there is no pollution all around.

I like a green place...

READER'S CHOICE

AN INDIAN DELICACY

By Reader of the Month :
Mudita Luthra

DURING the days of my postgraduate studies, I heard from a friend about *Butter Chicken in Ludhiana*. The name itself provoked curiosity, and since then, I had a desire to read it. I finally read it recently and enjoyed every bit of it. Very often while travelling (that's when I do my thinking for the day), I look around and make observations about people, places, things and the rest, and wonder why they are the way they are. So much has changed in the past few years, changed for the worse and one fails to understand where all the 'development' is taking us. They may be very minor details, but they speak of the culture, the society and the nation as a whole. I did not know till I was a few pages into the book that I would identify so much with Pankaj Mishra's *Travels In small Town India*.

The book opens when the author and his fellow sufferer, Mr. Chugh, are waiting for a bus to Muzaffarnagar. "Amidst the general wretchedness of Delhi's Inter State Bus Terminal (ISBT)—the thick fog of low-octane diesel smoke, the stench from open, unflushed toilets, the roar of bus engines, the countless cassette-players blaring simultaneously, the slushy floor, the swirling mobs of bewildered travellers, the thuggish touts for private buses, the aggressive child beggars, the bawling babies, the Hindi porno magazines in their yellow polythene covers..."

Pankaj Mishra has recorded every significant detail good or bad (usually bad) that he heard in various places. They may sound crude and obscene, but they are used by many people; how many I realised while reading the book. He found " 'fast-food' restaurants where a pizza was grated Amul cheese on sliced white bread, and a vegetable burger comprised of tikki slapped between two fruit buns."

His journey begins from Simla, and there begin the delays in bus-timings, the filth everywhere in the new world. In the Global Village modern tourism had done away with the inconveniences of the past—poisonous snakes, tigers and bandits. But it had definitely not done away with "the xenophobia, racism and sexism of the old world."

Later, he received an overwhelming welcome from Mr. Sharma in Ambala who was looking for a prospective son-in-law in 'Mishraji', and hence the profuse hospitality. The family feels that writing can make one a 'crorepati', just like Vikram Seth; thus it is a more profitable profession than business!

He then moved to Jaipur and its nearby towns only to discover what guest house owners thought. "Indians dirtied the place... and the foreign tourists who came after them complained."

While in Bundi, he was reading Iris Murdoch's *The Word Child*. He was asked, "This Eerice Murdoch. She is wife of Rupaart Murdoch, yes?"

In Hapur, he had the opportunity to attend a wedding reception which was entertained by Pappu Orchestra Party. The lead singer and his female counterpart—Baby Julie, sang Hindi and English numbers to an indifferent audience.

Pankaj Mishra then boarded the TN Express to begin his journey to South India. Once again he was questioned if Iris Murdoch was Rupert Murdoch's wife, and feeling defeated (I guess), he said yes. He proceeded to Bangalore (a city that boasts of the highest number of pubs, and an acute water shortage), Tiruppur, Kottayyam, Kanyakumari, Shimoga and Madras. From there, he took a train to Benares. He was accompanied by Mrs. Agarwal who held a Cine Blitz in her hands. Her husband, "a paunchy man in a patch laden purple denim shirt and gaberdine trousers... Her young sons... hanging close to their grandmother in expectation of the usual cash gift." When it was finally offered to them, they resisted half-heartedly, the mother "made some ineffectual noises about how unnecessary it all was... Disregarding her complaints, the grandmother pushed a few rupee notes down the kids trouser pockets. Mrs. Agarwal now shot stern prohibitory looks at her sons as, flush with money, they looked greedily at every passing vendor."

Benares, considered to be the cultural capital of India, was now a totally different city. It leads in a culture of its own..."people who have grown up in a very conservative traditional culture come face to face with the modern culture of the west through the media and lose their bearings altogether." The author narrates accounts of foreign women being harassed by men in Benares, and one feels ashamed on reading it.

His next destination is Calcutta and its neighbouring towns. And then to Malda, where he encounters a group of Haryanvi businessmen in a restaurant. The joke of the evening was—what is the national bird of Khalistan? Of course—Butter Chicken! "They laughed helplessly; they pushed their chairs back from the table to accommodate their shaking paunches; they clapped their hands and banged their fists hard on the table.."

He also had the pleasure of watching "Darr in a decreipt cinema-hall full of peanut shells, plastic bags and a rambunctious lower-stall audience. The torn cushions had turned a uniform black with grime, one did well to sit on chairs without any stuffing at all."

His interest took him to Gaya, which someone appropriately described as 'gaya-gujra' Gaya, the birth place of Buddha and Mahavira. Today, students aspiring for the Civil Services watch 'blue films' in cinema halls.

One last journey to Jehanabad, where "open fronted dhabas and sweet shops with glass encased coloured sweets" facing the railway station greet Pankaj Mishra to the last of small town India that he wishes to see.

The descriptions are so accurate, so vivid and so effective that I could imagine myself in the places he mentions. And with this feeling came that of shame, apology and irresponsibility. He traces the disastrous effects of satellite TV on the lowest classes of the Indian population who do not have the faintest idea about the world beyond their homes, and who believe the Bold and the Beautiful to be the closest approximation of life in the west.

That, unfortunately, is small town India. Wake up to reality with *Butter Chicken In Ludhiana*.

THE SPY CAT



Story :
Usha Bajracharya Verma
Illustrations :
Ajanta Guhathakurta

THE CRAZED, staring eyes at the bedroom window made me scream with fright. Wind and rain rushed through the darkness of a monsoon storm. As I jolted up from my pillow, the face at the window jerked downward. A hoarse shriek came from the verandah and the cowbells hanging on the front door jangled.

I ran down and pulled it open. There standing with one paw half-raised, was the most peculiar cat I had ever seen. He was as thin as a rail. His tail was an afterthought, thinner than my index finger, with a thick ball of fur at the end. On his face was a twitching and furtive leer.

After observing it for a while, it struck me that the feline actually resembled a spy, scrutinizing me in the dead of night. 'Spy-cat,' I thought, amused. "A failed spy," I uttered, labelling him more precisely.

Obviously, this spy had been on a tough and trying case. With unfavourable weather conditions, his coat was drenched to the bone and spattered with mud. With a twitch of his head and a groan—his all-purpose sound to indicate both pleasure and pain—he motioned me to follow him to the kitchen.

There he stood by the refrigerator door and bellowed. He then sat adroitly, with a perfect swing of his proud head, as if he desired to be waited upon by a waiter in a restaurant, and promptly lapped up the warm bowl of milk.

"Sly spy Sylvester!" I mumbled. A perfect name for a woebegone animal, washed out on a stormy night! And he turned out to be a rather complex animal too.

Geeti, my observant friend, confirmed my hunch that Sylvester was a spy. "That tattered, black and white over-

coat," she informed me, "is obviously a disguise. Be careful and be on your guard!" I failed to take her warning to heart.

Sylvester sidled into every room, trembling. He oozed into closets and the store room. He crawled into cupboards, slipped into drawers and what not. I guess he was a sly spy, investigating my entire house and its contents. I ate my breakfast to the thumps, bangs and crashes that heralded his discoveries—as though he did not want to be in the very places which he had gone to check out.

Once Sylvester, during his numerous inspections, managed to get into the bathroom and flush the toilet, emerging as if he was running away from the claws of death, half-drenched. Once his paws accidentally touched the switch of the vacuum cleaner he was checking out and he managed to turn the machine on, sweeping my desk clear of its weekly correspondence. I grew so accustomed to his racing in, out and about the house, from wherever and whatever that was after him, that I began to move about cautiously rather than bump or bang into him.

The next thing I noticed was that Sylvester had expensive tastes. He had great passion for caviar—a distinctly clear sign that he was a spy, who had known better, if not, more classical days.

With the boy next door though, Sylvester was on friendly terms, probably because he understood that no secret agent had ever been known to be disguised as a small boy. That was the day when he followed Chhotu to his house and sneaked into his comfortable bed, settling himself under his toes.

After a few weeks, I honestly asked myself why I put up with the odious cat. I failed to come up with a decent answer. I guess he was adorable and all that, but enough was enough! He belonged outdoors! And I certainly didn't care if someone was after him or not! Although I continued to feed him, Sylvester had only one mission outside: to get back inside. When I saw him through the windows, I hardened myself to his piteous staring face.

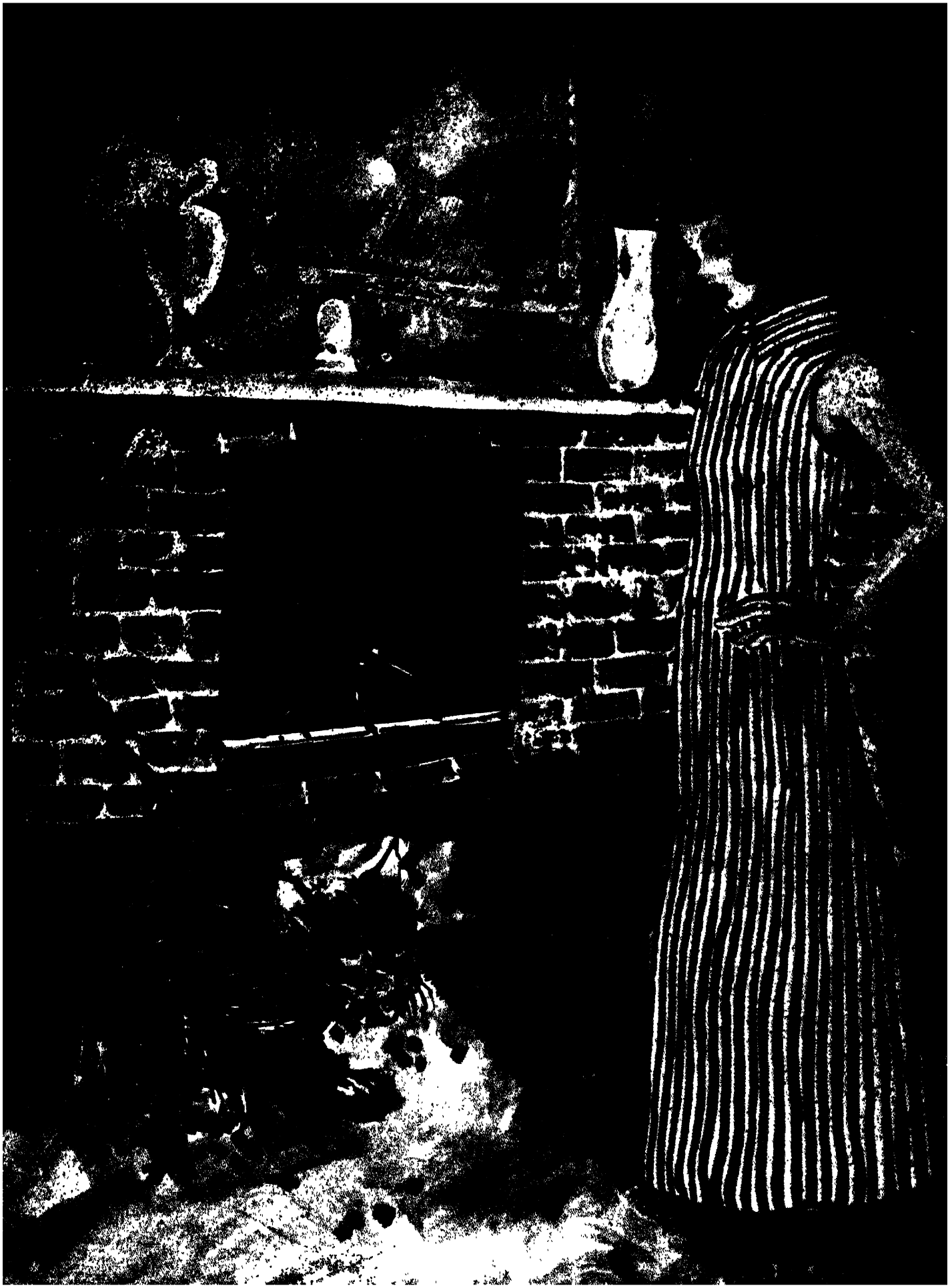
One day, seeing his face set in a tough and determined line, I knew that Sylvester had a plan up his sleeve. Just at that moment he let out an anguished scream and Geeti, who was visiting, jumped up. Then came the continuous cries of an innocent soul, unjustly punished by a heartless pet owner like me. How could I explain things to Geeti?

I might have guessed in any case that, as an experienced agent, Sylvester would devise a method of breaking into the house. He was an incredibly agile cat, since he had demonstrated his expertise on the night of his arrival at my window. Just as I thought that I had successfully blocked every entrance, the sly cat began appearing inside the house mysteriously every morning.

Obviously, the method he used to get back in made Sylvester dirty. I stayed up one night, reading late. The next moment, he must have calculated that the coast was clear. A sudden noise startled me. I thought that a bird had got caught in the chimney, except that birds never groaned. Then he burst out of the chimney like a benevolent Santa, wide-eyed and twitching!

Anyways, to get on to other things, Sylvester's diet revealed something of his status before his TROUBLES, whatever they had been, started. He choked on ordinary, non-buttered *rotis*. After much trial and error, I finally got him on prime chicken bones. Sylvester purred, which seemed compatible with the spy's code of not revealing emotion. However, his groans told me that this was the real thing he was used to all along.

Time passed and his coat became lustrous. Fur grew on his spindly tail. He was returning to what he had been before his dreadful ordeal in the storm. The once-paranoid hys-



terical cat no longer sidled into the room. He walked on all fours, confidently and slept soundly.

Just as he had improved, thanks to my genuine efforts, Sylvester began to reject me. He pointedly left the room when I came in. He stopped sleeping under my bed. Instead, he snoozed on my antique chaise longue, upholstered in cream and gold.

"Guess he's getting ready to leave you," predicted Geeti on one of her chatting visits.

"What do you mean?" I asked, surprised.

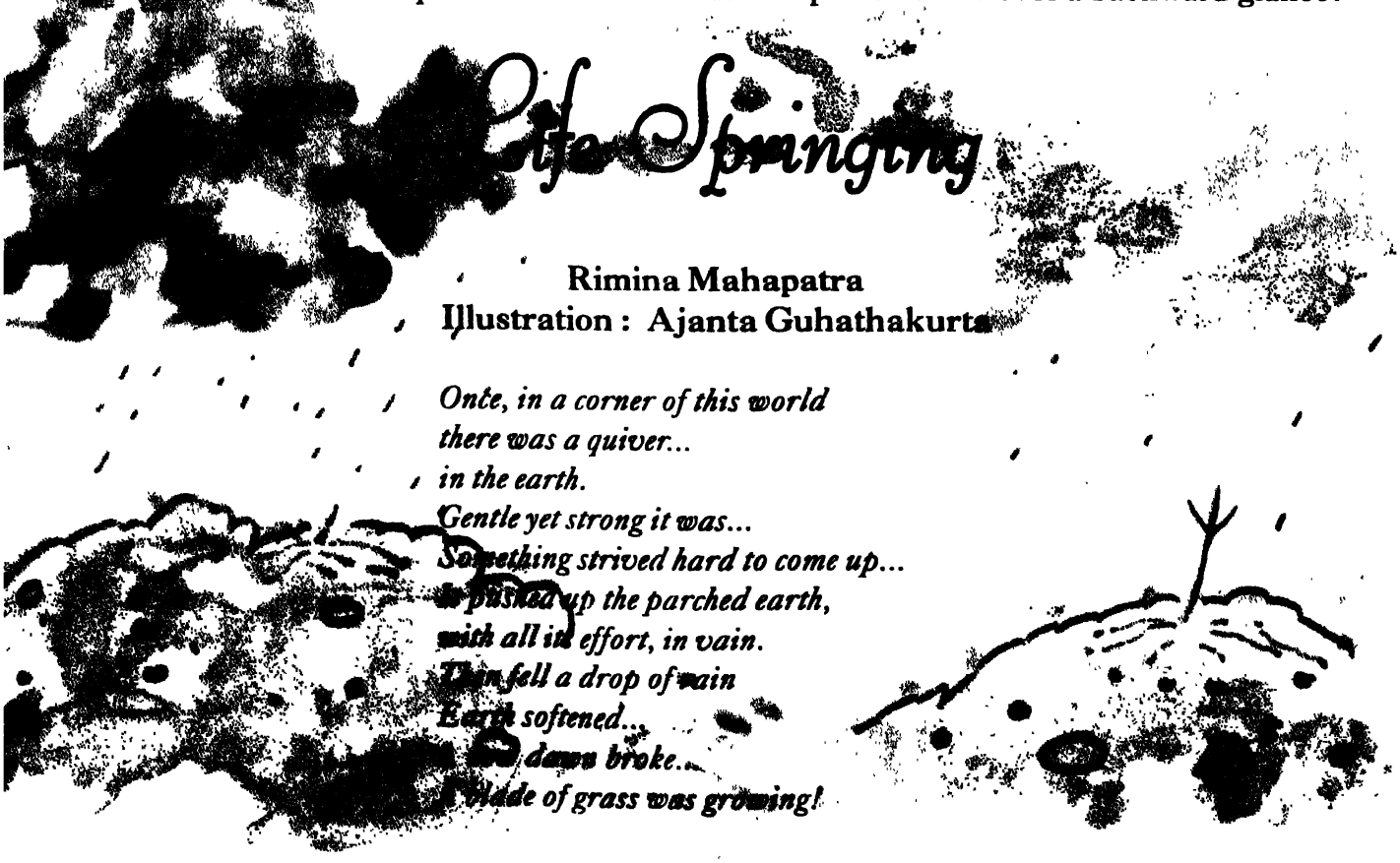
"The heat's off," Geeti declared, "He's been assigned to another case."

Sylvester's attitude towards visitors changed too. He bolted a[illegible] strange footsteps. He fawned over some people who came to the house. I had never witnessed such nauseating insincerity. He sat on their laps, wanting to be patted and purring his heart out when they did. However, by no means was he unselective. Was it my imagination that he made his decisions about how to treat people according to their dress and general appearance?

Most of my friends are modest people, not given to fancy clothes or cars. One summer, I was unexpectedly visited by my rich aunt. She came to my house in her designer clothes and diamonds, chauffeur-driven in her gleaming new foreign car. After an hour, my affluent aunt declared that she wanted the cat for keeps. "I've taken a silly fancy to th thing!" she confessed, sound ing exactly like the purrin Sylvester in her lap.

When I went to see m stinkingly rich aunt off Sylvester was seated in th expensive car. I knew that thi was good-bye. As I opened th gate, it struck me that my mod est house would never hav been Sylvester's style. My an cient fiat would have been poor joke in the world fron where Sylvester had com from.

The expensive car sailed past me. Sylvester sat bold an upright on his beautiful mis tress's lap, staring straigh ahead and purring down th road to a resumption of hi glamourous, former life, wit never a backward glance!



Life Springing

Rimina Mahapatra

Illustration : Ajanta Guhathakurta

Once, in a corner of this world
there was a quiver...
in the earth.
Gentle yet strong it was...
Something strived hard to come up...
it pushed up the parched earth,
with all its effort, in vain.
Then fell a drop of rain
Earth softened...
Dawn broke...
A blade of grass was growing!

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Mudra:FBL.181(R)



Here's a quiz to perk you up. Send in your entries and if your answers are correct, you may win one of our two prizes—of Rs. 100/- each. Each entry must be accompanied by your subscription number or with a cheque for a year's subscription. Children upto16 years may participate. Include your name, age, address and the name of your school. Last date for receiving entries: *October 1, 1997.* You could also fax your entries to us at 11-3721090.

By M.L.

1. Which film won the 1996 Oscar award for the best picture?
2. Which is the largest animal in the world?
3. Who wrote the book Animal Farm?
4. Which Indian state has the highest literacy rate?
5. Which country has the largest network of post offices in the world?
6. What is the name given to the hobby of stamp collecting and the study of postal history?
7. Besides humans, which other mammal is capable of distinguishing different colours?
8. A diamond and a lead pencil are made of the same element. Which one?
9. Where did origami originate?
10. What is the art of hat making called?
11. Which fish swims standing up?
12. A, B, AB and O—what are they?
13. Which is the gesture that man does not share with other earth animals?
14. Which city is called 'Australia's Front Door'?
15. How long is a marathon (in km)?
16. Which famous city was burned in 1866?
17. What is the Morse Code?
18. Who wrote *Gulliver's Travels*?
19. In Herman Melville's story, who was Moby Dick?
20. From which language does the word 'Bible' originate, and what does it mean?
21. What do the abbreviations a) RSVP b) ISRO stand for?
22. Which was the first artificial satellite to be put into orbit?
23. What is the capital of Sikkim?

CW Bonanza! At the end of twelve issues, there will be a Special Bumper Prize drawn by lot from among the 24 winners of the year. So come on, folks! Get cracking!

There were no all-correct entries for Bingo! July 1997.

PANDA CLUB OF INDIA

Newsletter Vol. I No. 8

Hi friends,

It was great experiencing the monsoons in India, with the rain pouring down endlessly in sheets, and the bright sparks of lightning and roaring thunder, the sudden lull before the storm, intercepted by croaking toads and cricket calls. I also wanted to join the urchins in streets splashing about in the water with gay abandon, but I would take too long to dry, and then, where was the sunshine?

But at the end of it all, everything around is lush green and the air is fresh and the birds fly about excitedly.

Tell me, did you have a great time in your vacation? I'm sure you didn't lead a dull existence, but used your imagination and energy to try out innovative things with your friends. Write in about your experiences and we'll share it with other Panda Club friends.

Now it's back to school and syllabus and homework and projects and charts. I'm sure it's great fun if you take it in the right spirit—put your mind to it and enjoy what you have to do—there is no escaping it or else you'll only land in trouble with your teacher!

That reminds me, September 5 is celebrated as 'Teacher's Day' in India. I intend to visit a few schools to see how they celebrate it. Could you perhaps write to me and tell me about your school celebrations on this day? I want to learn more and more about this great country and don't forget what I told you at the very beginning of my newsletter published in your magazine, CW, in February 1997, that I am your friend and confidante and would willingly share your joys and sorrows and even help you in times of difficulties. So if you have any problem worrying you, write to me and we'll work things out for the better.

Love you always,

Panda

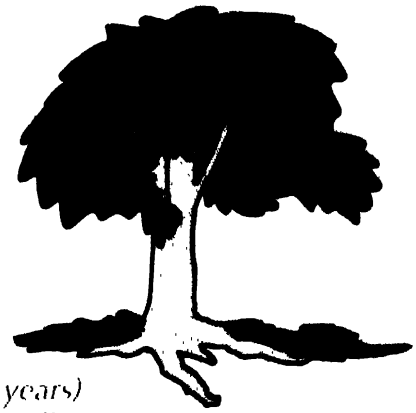


Trees here and there,
So green and so fair.
Their trunk golden brown,
Squirrels running up and down.

Bushes yellow and green,
They are the best I've ever seen.
They have flowers of different kind,
All over in front and behind.

Trees here and there,
So green and so fair.

Ankur Batra (9 years)
St. Columba's School, New Delhi.



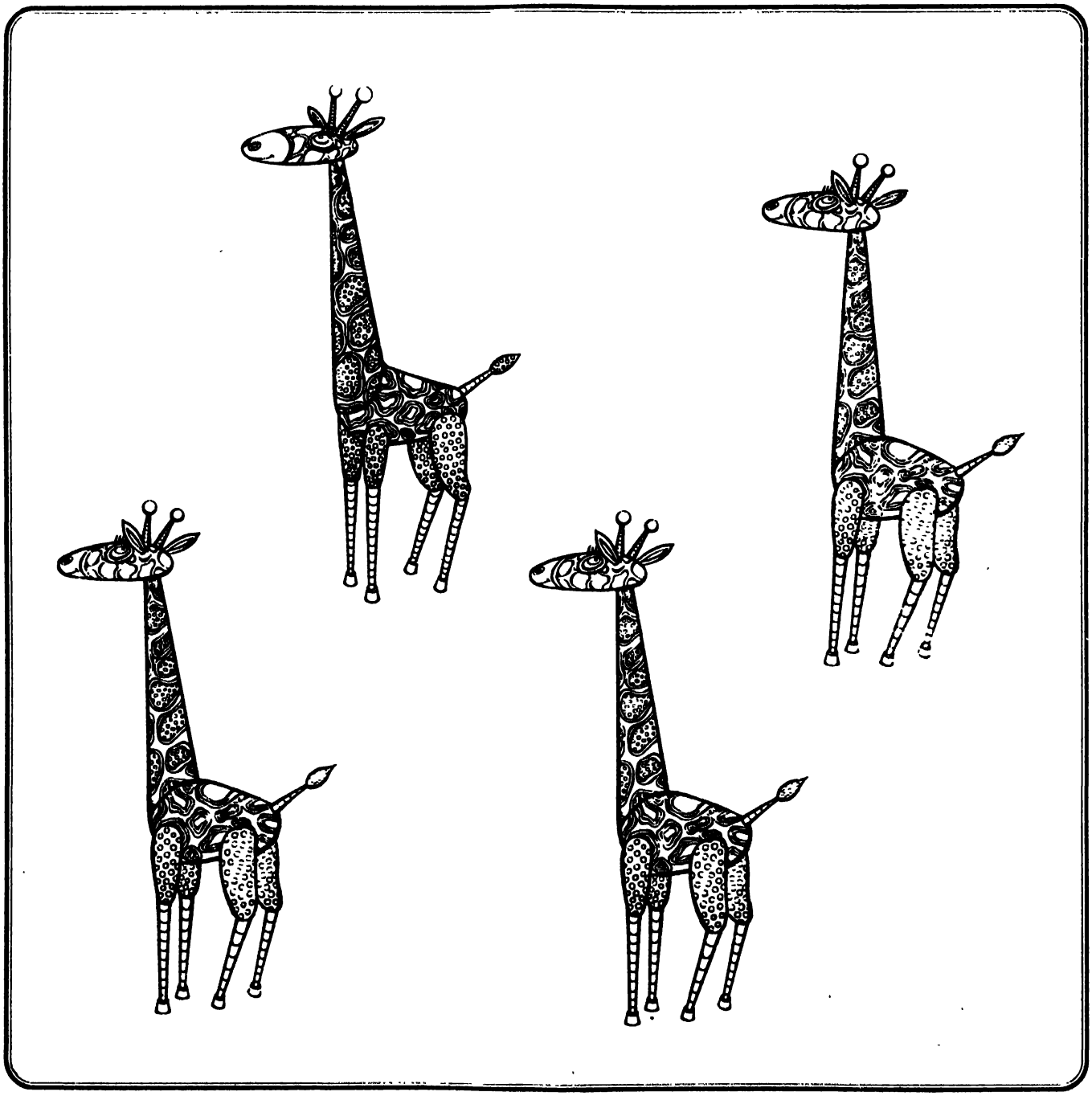
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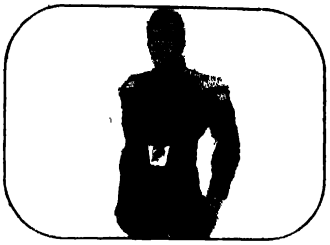
ILANA'S IDENTITY CRISIS

Ilana, the Giraffe of Rimba's Island, has an identity crisis—she always thought she was the most beautiful giraffe, but when she meets a herd of her own kind, she has her doubts. Colour the giraffes and mark the one which is different from the others—that is Ilana!

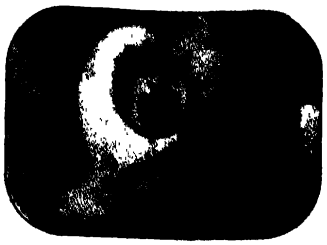
Send in your entries by September 30 and win exciting prizes from Perfetti.



Congratulations Rohan Menon, *New Delhi*, A. Bhattacharya, *Jamshedpur*, Vaishali V. Iyer, Khadki, *Gujarat*, Sunayna Dutt, *Mumbai*—Winners of 'Lost and Found'! You not only helped Bakari find his friends, but you also coloured him beautifully! I must admit, all you budding artists, the entries were so many that it was very difficult to select the winners. But the fun lies in participating, right?



Monday 5.30 P.M. on DD II—FLASH GORDON : On a vital mission to save planet Earth from 'Ming the Merciless', Flash Gordon makes a rocket journey to the planet Mongo. Join the adventures of Flash Gordon.



Tuesday 5.30 P.M. on DD II—RIMBA'S ISLAND : Six lively, lovable, colourful costumed animal characters who dwell deep in the idyllic rain forest, share their joys and learn from one another catchy songs and simple stories—(dubbed in Hindi)



Thursday 5.00 P.M. on DD II—SUPERHUMAN SAMURAI SYBER SQUAD : Sam Collins, a video game champion and leader of a teenage garage band, fights an alien warlord 'Kilokahn' who has infected the digital world with monster "megaviruses."

PANDA CLUB

Panda Club is trade mark of ABC Cable and International Broadcast Inc. in India

PANDA CLUB MEMBERSHIP RULES

To be a PANDA CLUB member you must be between 6 and 16 years of age.
The member must sign his/her card to activate member privileges
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The Card entitles ONLY the card-holding members to the following benefits.

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No. 2 Krishnamma Road
Nungambakkam
Chennai-600034, India



Thursday 5.30 P.M. on DD II—PHANTOM :
The legendary Lord of the jungle—Phantom, is incredible. Phantom uses the secrets taught by the natives of the deep woods to fight and conquer crime.



Saturday 6.00 P.M. on DD II—DENNIS THE MENACE : Irrepressible Dennis and his unwilling best friend, the grumpy Mr. Wilson will enthral you with their hilarious antics and send you into splits.



From April 5 5.30P.M. on DD II—DEFENDERS OF THE EARTH : Led by the Phantom, Flash Gordon and Mandrake the Magician challenge 'Ming' in a series of great adventures. They use powerful computers and space age technology to combat and overpower him.

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WRITE IN, "WHY I LIKE THE PANDA CLUB" (in less than 40 words)

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PANDA CLUB

1 Colour and identify Ilana.

2 Cut out the blank Panda Club Membership Card (A and B). Paste your stamp size (2.5x2.5 cm) colour photograph on B.

3 Complete the CW Subscription Form and send it with the Money Order/Demand Draft/Cheque payable to *Children's World.*

4 Put all the above in an envelope addressed to:
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YOUR CALENDAR OF PANDA CLUB SHOWS

CHANNEL	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
DOORDARSHAN METRO							
SITI							

SMALLEST LARGEST TALLEST

CINEMA! CINEMA!

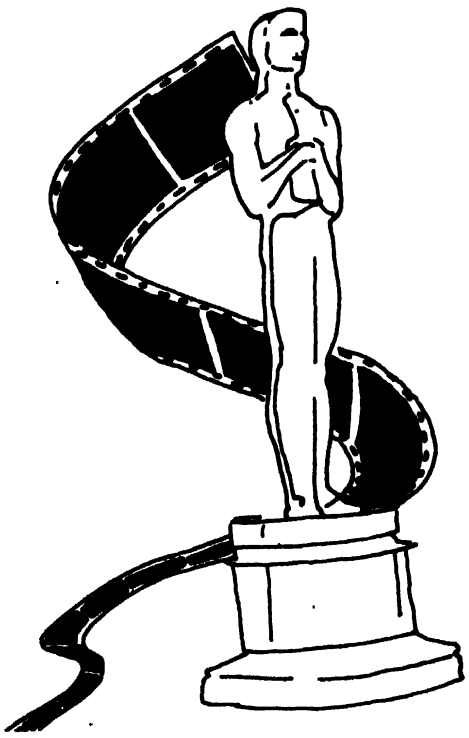
Illustrations : Nilabho Dhar Chowdhury

THE THRILL of watching a movie in a theatre is something that has to be experienced. This goes to show why our cinema halls are so crowded even after the advent of video cassette players and colour televisions that allow one to watch any movie of one's choice in the cosy comfort of one's drawing room.

Compared to other art forms, like music and theatre, films have a relatively short history since it was only in the late 19th century that movies began to be made. A remarkable feature is that movies came to India in 1896—a year after being exhibited in France. Today the Indian film industry is one of the most prolific, churning out potboilers by the dozen every year in several languages, mostly in Hindi, Telugu and Tamil.

- The very **first successful** motion photography was made by **Eadweard Muybridge,** a British photographer in the US, in 1877. It was the running of a horse. Muybridge achieved the feat by setting up a row of 12 and then 24 cameras with strings attached to their shutters. When the horse ran, it broke the successive strings, tripping the shutters.
- The **first public screening** of projected moving pictures was held by the Lumiere—brothers **Louis Jean** and **Auguste Lumiere** on December 28, 1895, in a Paris cafe.
- In India, the **first commercial screening** was held in Watson's Hotel, Mumbai, on July 7, 1896, barely seven months after the world's first show in Paris! It was done by means of a Cinematographe, the machine brought by the Lumiere brothers. Four 40 minute shows were held every day at a very steep entrance fee of Re 1 per ticket.
- The very **first film** which was used to tell a story was **The Great Train Robbery**, in 1903. The film lasted for 11 minutes and became a great hit.
- The very **first film shot in India** was **Coconut Fair** in 1897. It was made by a foreign photographer, whose name is not known.
- The **first talkie film** made was **The Jazz Singer** in 1927. Though it was silent for most part, the popular entertainer Al Jolson sang and spoke in a few scenes in synchronous sound.
- The **first Indian talkie film** was **Alam Ara,** made in 1931. It had seven songs and had a run of seven weeks.
- The popular **animated cartoons** of today had their origin in Great Britain in 1899, when **Arthur Melbourne-Cooper** moved matchsticks in different sequences and photographed them frame by frame.

- It was in 1900, that American newspaper illustrator James Stuart Blackton made a film 'Humorous Phases of Funny Faces' by filming faces drawn on a blackboard in progressive stages. Incidentally, the **first Mickey Mouse cartoon** which had synchronised sound, also for the first time, was **'Steamboat Willie'** made in 1928. Today, of course, we have computer animated cartoons, which have synchronised sound. This is a far cry from moving matchsticks!
- The **first major film festival** was held in **Venice, Italy** in 1932. Today, the largest and best-known festival is the Cannes Festival in France.
- The **Oscar Award** was instituted by the **US Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences**. But why Oscar? It got its name when a librarian of the Academy remarked that the statue resembled her uncle Oscar!





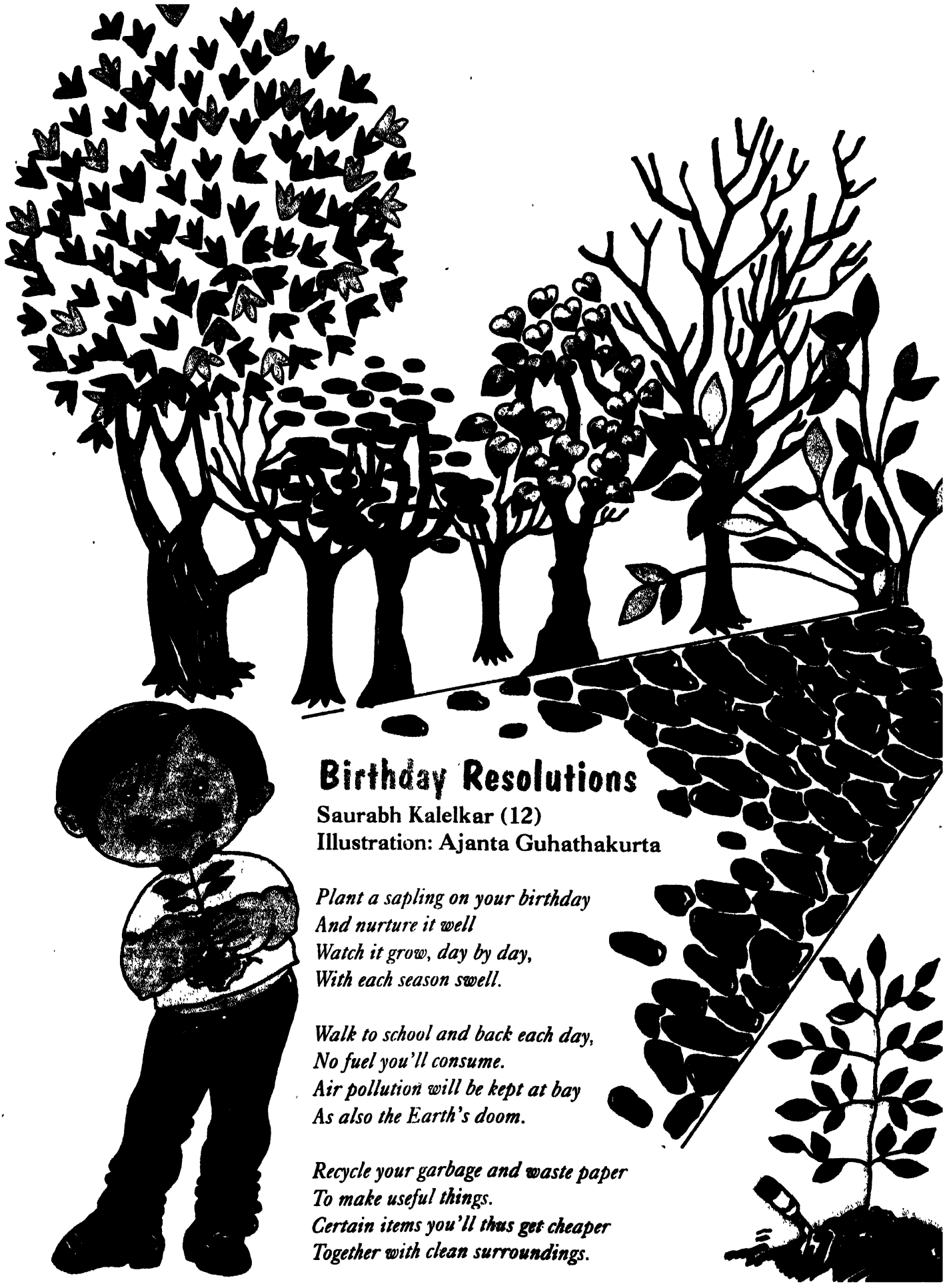
- The **largest grosser** in terms of revenue is the Hindi film *Hum Apke Hain Kaun*, which has grossed Rs. 200 crores. It was also the first Indian film to complete a Golden Jubilee at Bellevue, London. Steven Spielberg's Jurassic Park grossed Rs. 180.5 crores.
- The Indian film with the **longest run** was **Sholay,** which had a combined run of regular and special time shows at a Bombay theatre—it ran for nearly six years from 1975–81.
- **Prem Nazir,** the Malayalam film hero **holds the record** for acting in the **most number of films**—over 600; in Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu and Kannada. In one year, (1979), as many as 39 of his films were released and in all of them, he played the hero!
- **Satyajit Ray** has several firsts and 'onlys' to his credit. He was the first Indian to be awarded the **Oscar for 'Lifetime Achievement'** in 1992.

  He was the first Indian film maker to get the **Magsaysay Award.**

  His films have won over 30 international awards, prizes and diplomas from various countries.

  He is the only Indian film-maker to be awarded the **Legion d' Honneur** in 1989, the highest civilian award in France.
- The largest cinema theatre in the country is Thangam, in Madurai, Tamil Nadu. It has a seating capacity of 2,563.

Compiled by Thangamani



Birthday Resolutions

Saurabh Kalelkar (12)
Illustration: Ajanta Guhathakurta

Plant a sapling on your birthday
And nurture it well
Watch it grow, day by day,
With each season swell.

Walk to school and back each day,
No fuel you'll consume.
Air pollution will be kept at bay
As also the Earth's doom.

Recycle your garbage and waste paper
To make useful things.
Certain items you'll thus get cheaper
Together with clean surroundings.



ENTRY FORM

Please fill out this Entry Form and send it with your artwork (inclusive of descriptive title and written paragraph) to reach us by October 14, 1997. **You may use a photocopy of this Entry Form and submit as many entries as you wish.**

First Name: _____

Surname: _____

Home Address: _____

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City: _____ Pin Code: _____

State: _____ Country: _____

Name of School and Full Address: _____

_____

Contact Telephone No.: _____ Fax: _____

Date of Birth (day/month/year): ____ / _____ / _____

Descriptive Title of Artwork: _____
(Enclose the written paragraph with this form)

I heard about Visa Olympics of the Imagination through: _____

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Date: ____ / ____ / _____

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Entrant Signature Parent or Legal Guardian Signature

By entering this contest, I hereby transfer and assign my artwork, descriptive title and written paragraph and all copyrights therein to Visa International Service Association, together with all other representations, warranties and rights as specified in the Rules & Regulations : India. I understand that my artwork, descriptive title and written paragraph will not be returned.

VISA OLYMPICS OF THE IMAGINATION 1998

RULES & REGULATIONS : INDIA

1. How To Enter: NO PURCHASE NECESSARY / FREE APPLICATION FORMS / NO APPLICATION FEE. Contest runs from September 1, 1997 to October 14, 1997. You must be between the ages of 9 and 13 (inclusive), as of December 31, 1997 (proof of age will be required for winner's eligibility). The object of the contest is to think of a person you admire, and then draw or paint that person as a competitor in the 1998 Olympic Winter Games. Final artworks must be no larger than 17 inches X 17 inches (36 cms X 36 cms) and created on paper only. All entries/artworks must be accompanied by a written paragraph (50 words or less),describing why you admire the person you have drawn, and why you portrayed him/her in the Olympic Winter Sport you chose. A descriptive title must accompany each artwork. Entries must be accompanied by a completed Entry Form signed by you and your parent or legal guardian and sent to the following address: **Visa Olympics of the Imagination - India, c/o 56 Whitehall, 143 A.K. Marg, Kemp's Corner, Mumbai 400 036, India.** Entries must be received no later than October 18, 1997.
2. You may submit as many entries as you wish. You may use a photocopy of the Entry Form. All artworks must be original, created solely by one individual entrant and never previously published. Sponsor is not responsible for lost, late, incomplete, illegible, damaged or misdirected postage due to mail.
3. Entries will be judged by a panel of judges approved by Visa International on the basis of the artwork's originality and imagination, and the artwork's artistic merit. The judges will not have access to the written paragraph. The title of the artwork and the written paragraph will not be part of the judging process. Judges' decisions are final on all matters relating to this contest.
4. One (1) Grand Prize will be awarded in this contest This grand prize consists of a 4-night, 5-day trip for the winner and his or her parent or legal guardian to the 1998 Olympic Winter Games at Nagano in Japan, including hotel (double occupancy), round trip coach airfare from an international airport closest to winner's home, ground transport to scheduled events, meals and selected admission to Olympic events. Payment of all taxes on prize and for any trip expenses not specified, are the winner's responsibility. Winner and one parent or legal guardian must be able to travel at time selected by Sponsor, i.e. between February 4, 1998 to February 12, 1998 or forfeit the prize. No prize substitutions or transfers will be permissible, and also not redeemable for cash. The prize will be delivered to the winner's parent or legal guardian.
5. Contest is open to all Indian citizens residing in India who are between the ages of 9 and 13 (inclusive), as of December 31, 1997, except for children of employees of VISA, participating partner sponsors and their respective parent and subsidiary companies and their agents and suppliers with respect to this contest. The contest is subject to all applicable Indian laws and regulations. Void where prohibited.
6. By participating, entrant transfers all rights in and to the artwork and written paragraph, including all copyrights to Sponsor and agrees to these official rules and to accept decisions of Sponsor as final. Entries become the property of the Sponsor and will not be returned. Winner and parent or legal guardian must sign and return an affidavit of eligibility and liability, and where legal, Publicity Release within 14 days of prize notification or prize will be forfeited and awarded to an alternate winner. Winner and parent or legal guardian must have valid passports and be eligible for entry into Japan on travel dates.
7. In the event of a tie, a duplicate prize will be awarded.
8. The names of the winners will be announced in major publications. For the names of the winners, send a self-addressed stamped envelope along with your entry artwork.
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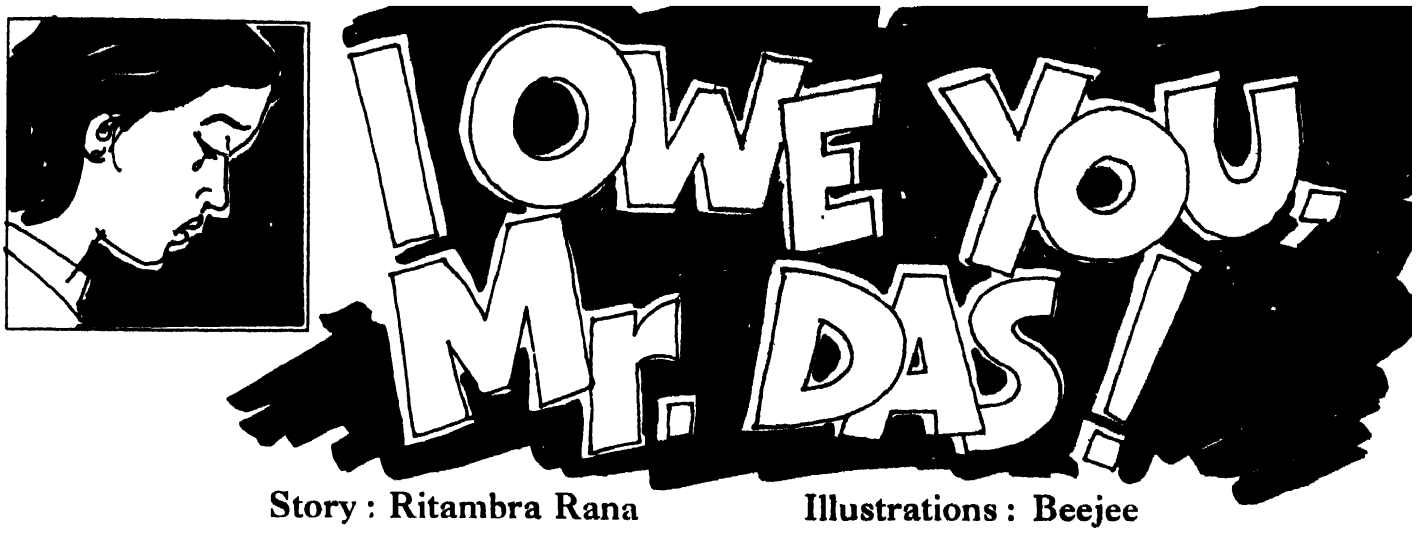


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Story : Ritambra Rana **Illustrations : Beejee**

SOME PEOPLE would consider me a success today because I have a large bank account and because I'm famous in my profession; but success can mean different things to different people. If I were to ask Mr. Das whether I was a success today, he would simply ask me one question; "Have you put in your best in what you're doing and done it honestly? If no, then irrespective of how much money you have made or how many magazines want to interview you, you are a failure. And I probably would have been just that had it not been for him.

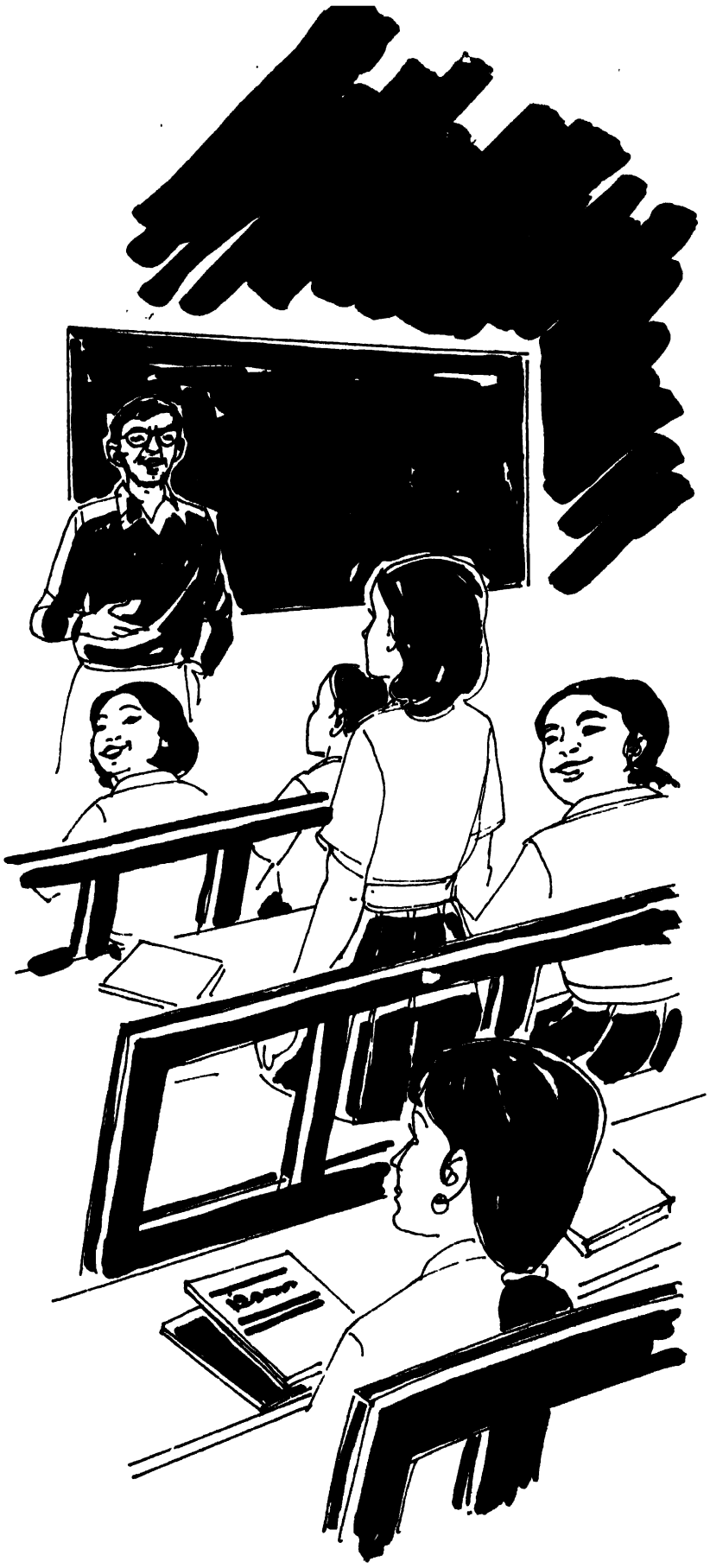
Thinking of Mr. Das takes me back to my rebellious teen years. When it was so easy to deceive everyone into believing you were good-for-nothing that gradually you started believing it yourself too. But I was good at one thing—getting into trouble. I mean big time trouble. I would probably go down in school history for having spent the maximum number of hours punished, if someone had bothered to keep a record. It was all worth it just to see the awe in the eyes of all the schoolgirls. I did all the things they dreamt of doing but never had the guts to.

Every year there was a new class teacher, so every year I went through the same process. First I would shock her with my rudeness; she would be suitably shocked; then she would try to be patient with me and, boy, would I try her patience. The next phase was the "You-have-the-brains-but-don't-use-them" tactic; but by the end of the first term she would have given up on me and for the rest of the year she would try her best to ignore me.

Now there's only one thing I hate more than the "You-have-the-brains-but-don't-use-them" tactic, and that's people ignoring me. So I devised new ways to get 'noticed' and some of them were quite successful judging by the time I spent outside the principal's office. My popularity rose in direct proportion to the frequency of the punishments.

Yet considering how popular I was in school I still had no real friends. Everyone advised me but no one wanted to be my friend. People only saw the confident exterior not the loneliness inside. Without knowing it I had alienated myself from everyone. I just never realised that friendship is not based on admiration but on mutual trust. So, I kept trying to win over friends without succeeding.

When we moved up to class VIII, we were in for a surprise —a *male* teacher, Mr. Das! In all my years I had yet to encounter this species. Since everyone was depending on me to 'welcome' him in the appropriate manner, I couldn't



let them down. First we needed a nice caption for the blackboard. We settled on 'DAS IS BAKWAAS'—a little tacky but it would have to do considering the short notice we had. As the bell rang for the English period, all of us rushed to our seats in anticipation. A tall, thin, well-dressed man in his late 40's entered. Considering he was new in school he seemed quite comfortable in his surroundings. He smiled at us and his eyes swept over the room. When they reached the blackboard, the smile stayed intact and he showed no reaction. I could sense everybody's disappointment and somehow felt personally responsible.

Before I had a chance to dwell any further on this, he turned to us. "Why don't you introduce yourselves to me as I'm new here," he said. This was easier than I had expected. I thought, let my chance come then I'll see how he doesn't react. Everyone stood up one-by-one and gave their names. There was a sense of expectancy in the air. They knew I had something planned. When my partner Smita sat down after introducing herself, he looked at me and asked "and your name...?"

"Michael Jackson," I replied with a Sickly Sweet Smile.

Someone behind me snickered loudly and I could hear

muffled sounds of giggling from various corners of the room. With a triumphant look I smiled at him, waiting. He just politely smiled back and looked at Priya behind me and said, "Your name, please."

My jaw dropped and a hush descended in class. After that everyone gave their names quickly. By this time the period was almost over. As the bell rang, Mr. Das looked at the blackboard and said, "In future no one in my class will use English and Hindi words in the same sentence. Tomorrow we start Shakespeare's 'Macbeth' so please read Act I, Scene I before coming to class." With that he walked out.

That night I spent plotting revenge but Mr. Das never gave me a chance. The other teachers expected me to create problems so they used to treat me differently but Mr. Das made no distinction between me and the other students. For me this was worse than being ignored. I must have tried everything but turn cartwheels to get his attention but to no avail.

Gradually I saw a change in everyone's attitude. The admiration shifted from me to Mr. Das. Everyone started showing an interest in English and Shakespeare. Sometimes even I got so caught up in the exciting class discussions that I had to stop myself from participating—after all I had a reputation to protect! I wanted my old popularity back and I knew it was time for drastic action.

So I tried something I should never have—smoking. I hated it. It left a burning sensation in my chest and made me feel dizzy, but, oh! how cool I felt holding a cigarette between my fingers. I didn't think of the consequences, just about regaining the lost respect in the eyes of my classmates.

But it backfired—someone complained to Mr. Das and this time I knew I was in for it. My parents could understand all those other pranks as childish acts but this was serious. As I entered Mr. Das's room, for the first time in my life I experienced fear and shame. I didn't enjoy the feeling. I had never seen him look so angry. I stood before him, my head hanging. I prayed to God to get me out of this and promised I'd never, ever cause any trouble again.

"Ria, for the last few months I've seen you try everything and anything to get attention, but do you realise that your self-centredness can cause so much damage. I ignored your earlier attitude as childish and immature behaviour, but smoking in school, or for that matter anywhere, is a lot more serious. Do you realise that other girls might follow your example? All your life you've only thought about yourself. When will you grow up, Ria...? Today you have fallen in my estimation. You've let down your school as well as your parents."

Standing before Mr. Das I did something I had never done before any teacher. I wept... tears of shame and humiliation. I could have done anything to change what I had done, but it was too late. Somehow Mr. Das seemed to know what I was feeling because he said, "Ria, I don't want your parents to go through this pain and embarrassment, so I'll give you another chance. We'll forget what happened and start over. Do you understand what I'm saying, Ria?" he said sternly.

"Yes, Sir," I replied in a shaky voice.

"Go back to class now."

That night I thanked God for the second chance I had been given. After that day I was always subdued in class but I knew that I would never be able to look Mr. Das in the eye again. But things were going to change again and very soon.

A few months after the smoking fiasco Mr. Das made an announcement in class. "Since we've finished reading Macbeth, I've decided that the best way for you to understand the play is to get into the skins of the characters. What



I mean is that this class is going to put up this play on stage for the entire school to watch. It will be entirely your production. So we'll choose a Director by drawing lots. She will be in charge of the production. So everyone write your names on paper, fold them and pass them on to me."

There was a buzz of excitement in the room. Never before had we done such a project. Everyone wrote their names on pieces of paper and handed them over to Mr. Das. I did likewise, as I did not want to draw attention to myself by refusing. Mr. Das shuffled the chits and picked out one. We held our breaths as he read out the name—"Ria Singh". Everyone gasped and turned to look at me. I was too shocked myself to respond. I just looked up at Mr. Das and for the first time in weeks, he smiled at me and said, "So, Michael Jackson, are you up to it?"

The rest is history. The play was a milestone in school events, a major success that led to other developments. The school started a Drama Club and I was elected its president. Also, for the first time, instead of a fan club I had real friends.

After passing out from school I studied acting at a leading drama school and from theatre I moved on to TV serials. I became a well-known

TV actress and in the process lost touch with Mr. Das.

It had been 12 years since I passed out of school when I happened to meet an old school friend. I asked her about the old classmates and teachers she was still in touch with. She told me Mr. Das had died of cancer a year and a half ago. I felt a little disturbed and regretted not having kept in touch with him. On the spur of the moment I decided to visit his wife.

Standing outside the building where she lived I felt a little stupid for having come, but since I was there I decided to go ahead I stopped outside the door and nervously ran my hands down my skirt. My mind was blank trying hard to picture Mr. Das as he was in school.

Summoning up my courage I rang the bell. A few seconds later I could hear some sounds inside and then the door opened a little, and a head peeped out. She must have been in her late 50's, a petite woman with a slightly wrinkled face. Mrs. Das, I figured. She looked at me questioningly and then recognition dawned in her eyes. "Ria Singh," she said in a surprised voice. Before she could speak any further, I rushed in "I...I'm here to see... I mean I was a student of Mr. Das in school. I...I just heard about his death yesterday. So...I came to see you... You're his wife, I presume?"

"Yes, yes, come in. He spoke about you so often..."

As I walked in I had already started regretting my decision to come. Why bring back painful memories for this poor lady?

She pointed to the sofa for me to sit down. I self-consciously sat down. She seemed to sense my unease and sat down next to me. "He was so proud of you, never missed any of your programmes on TV..." She said, only increasing my uneasiness.

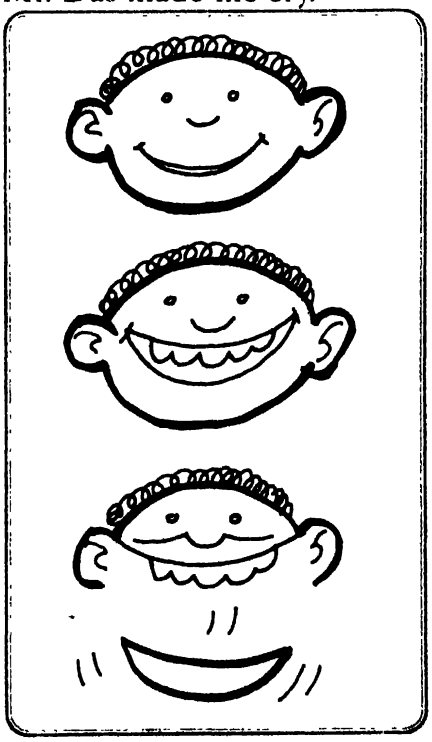
"Uh...we were proud of him too at school," I replied. "He set such high standards for all of us, I have so much to thank him for... I wish I had known earlier... About the illness, I mean." I was almost babbling now. And seeing the pain in Mrs. Das's eyes I felt like kicking myself.

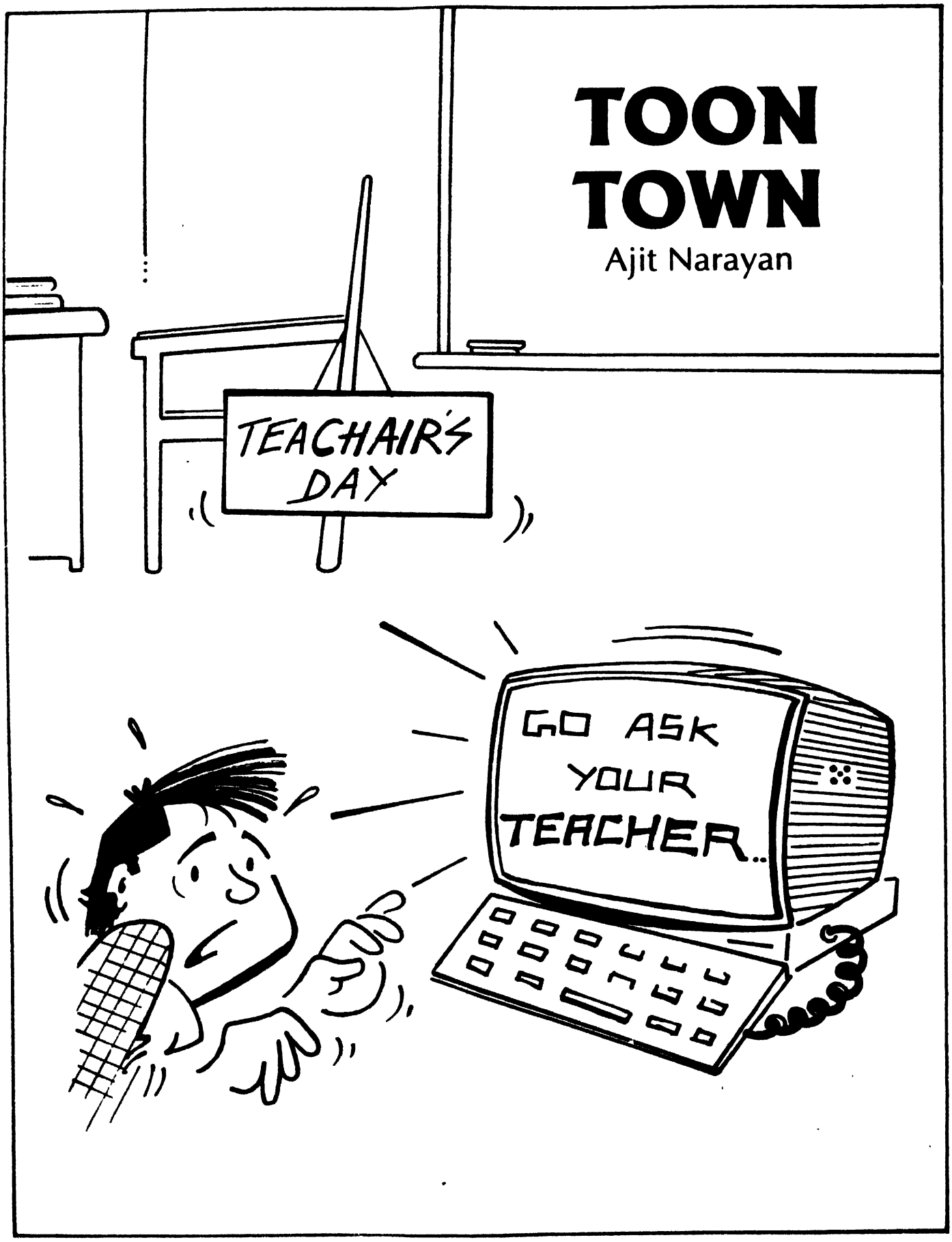
"I...I'll leave now," I said hurriedly standing up to leave, but she was oblivious to everything. "Yes... he had such high standards for everything," she replied misty-eyed... "Yes, he told me that in his entire adult life he had lied only once... something about picking names for a play in one of his classes...I don't remember too well ... he said he called out a different name from the one he picked... I didn't really understand what he meant. Before he died he said something very strange, he said it was the best thing he had done in his entire life."

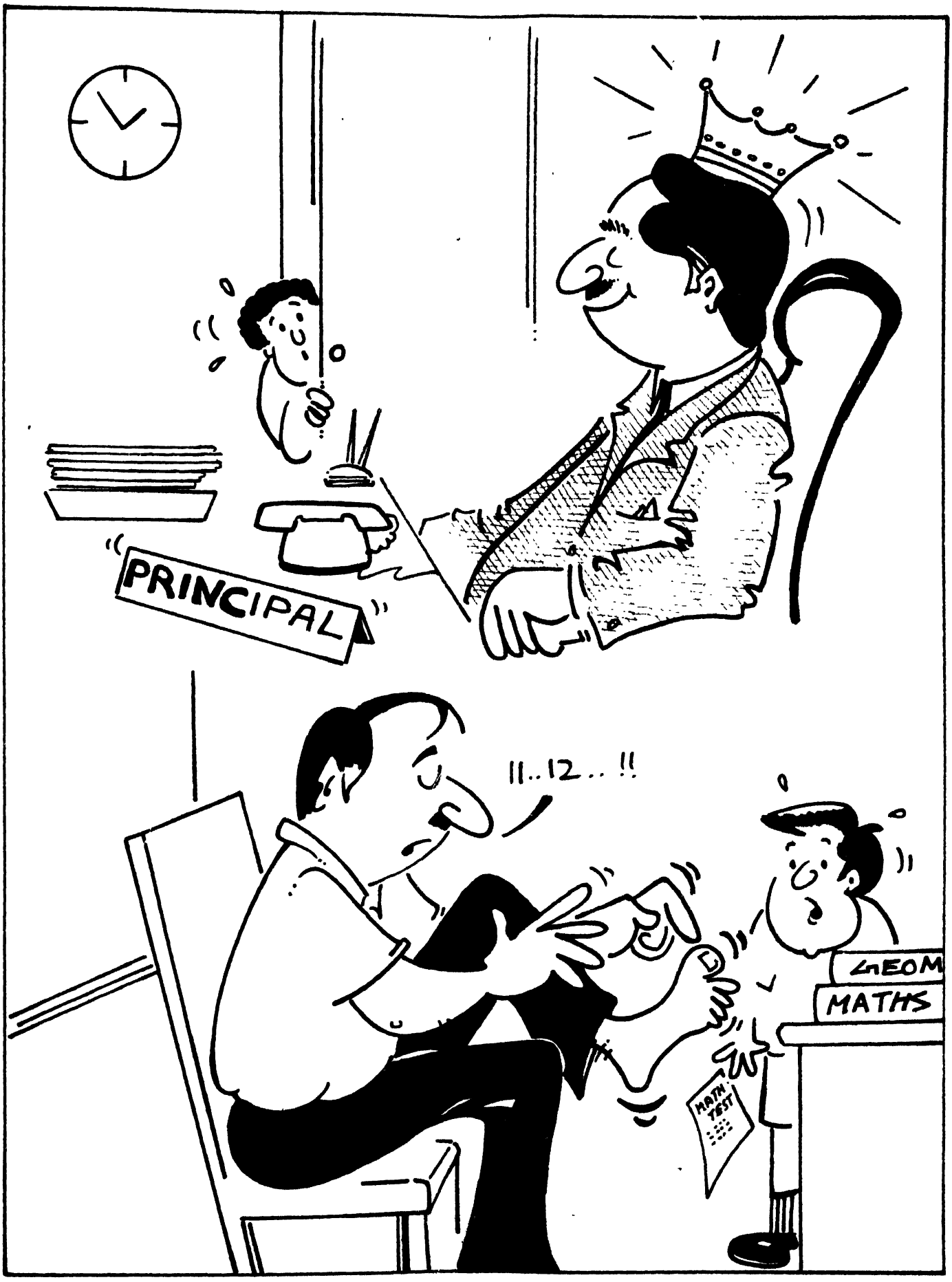
I stood there shocked... unable to move... and then for the second time in my life, Mr. Das made me cry.

Answers to Bingo! (July 1997)

1. MacMohan Line **2.** Pig **3.** 70 minutes **4.** Haryana **5.** Charles Wilkin's Bhagawad Gita in 1784 **6.** The knack of making fortunate discoveries by accident **7.** Leonardo da Vinci **8.** Giant Panda **9.** R.K. Narayan **10.** P.T. Usha **11.** Drone **12.** Mudskipper **13.** Mumbai (Dharavi) **14.** 1969 **15.** Shatabdi Express **16.** Cultivation of dwarf trees and plants **17.** Hatred of foreigners **18.** June 5 **19.** 4—Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh **20.** Bengal Gazette




TOON
TOWN
Ajit Narayan
TEACHAIR'S
DAY
GO ASK
YOUR
TEACHER..


PRINCIPAL
11..12..!!
GEOM
MATHS
MATH TEST

SACRED GROVES— TREASURE TROVES

Text : Priya Padmanabhan
CEE-NFS

NATURE HAS always been an integral part of Indian life and society. Indian religion and folklore abound with myths and stories about sylvan deities and worship of the forms of Nature as God. Sacred groves are an example of how forests, protected and revered over the ages as places of worship, are also the repositories of rare biodiversity.

Sacred groves are distributed all over India especially in the Western Ghats of Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra. The sacred groves are referred to as "Kans" in Uttar Kannada district of Karnataka, "Kavus" in Kerala and Tamil Nadu and "Devara Kadu" in Coorg. Sacred forests constitute 6% of the land area in Uttara Kannada district. These sacred groves have temples devoted either to the sylvan deities, common village deities or the Mother Goddess.

Most of these sacred groves were under the control of the village communities. Felling of trees for timber was taboo which ensured that the fauna survived through the ages. There was no interference with the biota of the groves, and grazing, hunting and even removal of leaf litter was not allowed. Even today, some of these forest shelter rare plants and protect water sources in the area.

The most common tree species revered and protected in most of the groves are trees belonging to the genus Ficus which includes the banyan, fig and peepal. Ficus species are considered "keystone species" which implies that they are critical for the maintenance of tropical diversity particularly in fruit-eating birds says a study by Prof. Madhav Gadgil, Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore.

Some of the larger sacred groves in Uttara Kannada are the ultimate treasure troves of flora and fauna and support many species of plants endemic to the area. They serve as the last refuge for arboreal birds and mammals like the endangered lion-tailed macaque. In a "kavu" in Kerala, five species of the plant Hopea were found of which four are endemic to south-western India. Besides protecting genetic diversity, the sacred forests also furnish the community with non-wood resources like edible fruits, medicine, honey, toddy and fibre for basket and mat weaving. In addition to catering to community needs, medicinal plants sheltered in these groves could aid scientific research by yielding useful derivatives which could be used in the pharmaceutical, chemical and food processing industries.

The decline of the sacred forests began once the forests went out of community control and is attributed to the weakening influence of religion with the spread of modern civilization.

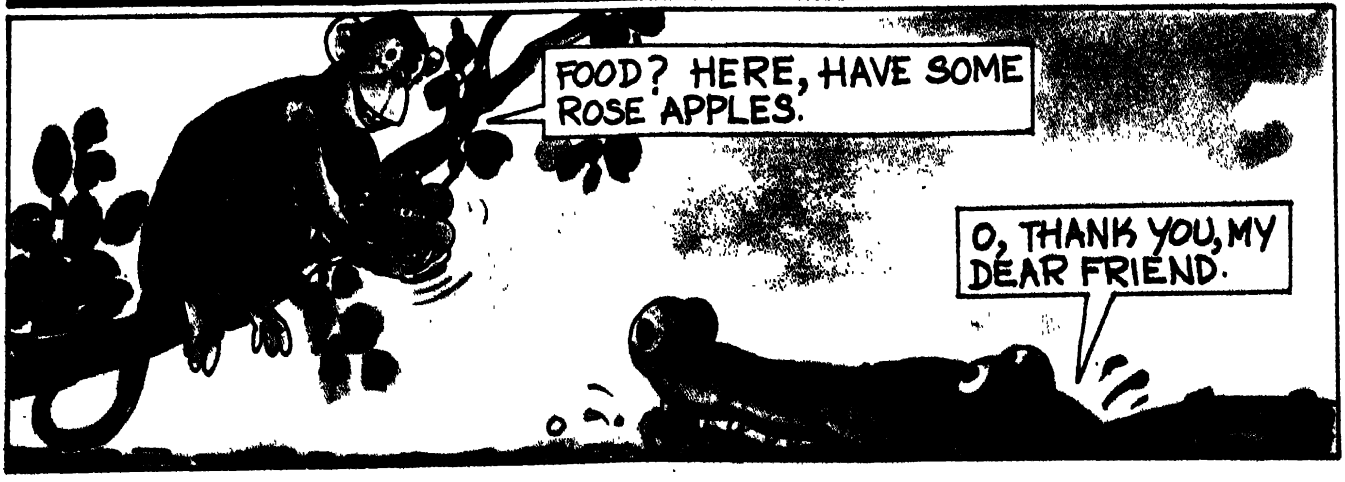
Further, the general scarcity of biomass resulted in large scale exploitation of forest resources. Many timber-yielding trees were felled for plywood and other forest-based industries. Some forests were cleared to make way for eucalyptus plantations. Sacred groves seem to be no longer sacrosanct.

The Monkey and the Crocodile

STORY RETOLD BY SHIV KUMAR
ILLUSTRATIONS : Beejee








MMM, THIS IS THE BEST FRUIT I HAVE EVER EATEN. MAY I COME AGAIN?
YOU'RE ALWAYS WELCOME, MY DEAR.
THE MONKEY AND THE CROCODILE BECAME FRIENDS, SPENDING MUCH TIME TOGETHER, TALKING, PLAYING, EATING.
I'M ALL ALONE, I'M LUCKY TO HAVE YOU FOR A FRIEND, DEAR CROCODILE.
I'M NOT ALONE, DEAR MONKEY. I'VE A WIFE IN THE FAR SIDE OF THE RIVER.
YOU HAVE A WIFE? WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME BEFORE?
HERE, TAKE SOME ROSE APPLES FOR HER.
THE NEXT DAY
MY WIFE LOVED THE ROSE APPLES. SHE ASKED ME TO THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR THEM.


MANY DAYS PASSED. THE CROCODILE WENT HOME VERY LATE EVERY DAY. HIS WIFE BEGAN TO FEEL NEGLECTED. ONE DAY THE CROCODILE'S WIFE PRETENDED TO BE ILL...
OOOH! I'M DYING. THIS PAIN IS KILLING ME...
WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU, WIFE? DO NOT CRY SO.
ONLY A MONKEY'S HEART CAN CURE ME. BRING ME YOUR FRIEND... AND I SHALL GET WELL.
BUT HE IS MY FRIEND, HOW CAN I KILL HIM?
BOO! HOO! YOU DON'T CARE FOR ME. I CAN DIE BUT YOUR FRIEND MUST NOT.
THE NEXT DAY A TROUBLED CROCODILE MEETS HIS FRIEND, LATE.
WHAT IS THE MATTER? WHY ARE YOU SO SAD?
FRIEND, I HAVE FOUGHT WITH MY WIFE. SHE WANTS TO MEET YOU. WILL YOU CLIMB ON MY BACK SO THAT I CAN TAKE YOU TO THE OTHER BANK TO MEET HER?


O, SURE, LET'S GO NOW.
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE RIVER, THE CROCODILE STARTS DIVING.
HEY, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
TAKING YOU TO MY WIFE. SHE WANTS TO EAT A MONKEY'S HEART TO CURE HER OF HER ILLNESS.
THE MONKEY THOUGHT QUICKLY.
WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SO BEFORE, FRIEND? I LEFT MY HEART IN THE ROSE APPLE TREE. TAKE ME BACK. I'LL GET IT FOR YOU.
THE FOOLISH CROCODILE SWAM BACK. AS THEY REACHED THE BANK, THE MONKEY TOOK A GIANT LEAP AND...
GOOD BYE, CROCODILE! GO BACK TO YOUR WICKED WIFE AND TELL HER YOU ARE THE GREATEST FOOL IN THE WORLD!
?
END



A TOUCH OF PAIN

Text : Sonali Shankar

FOR HUMANS, seeing and hearing are the major senses. We depend on them, particularly for communication. Nevertheless, without our sense of touch, our senses of taste and smell, and our senses of body motion and position, we humans would be seriously handicapped, and our capacities for enjoying the world would be devastatingly diminished.

If you had to give up one sense, which would it be? If you could retain only one sense, which would it be?

Our sense of touch would be a very good candidate for retention. Right from the beginning of human life the sense of touch is extremely essential to our development.

Experiments conducted in humans and animals have supported the importance of this particular sense. It has been recorded that babies born prematurely gain weight faster and go home sooner if constantly stimulated by hand massage. Similarly infant rats deprived of their mothers' grooming touch produce less growth hormone and have a lower metabolic rate—a good way to keep alive until the mother returns, but resulting in stunted growth if the mother's return is delayed.

Another experiment done on monkeys involves infant monkeys who are allowed to see, hear, and smell their mothers but not touch them. These infant monkeys are desperately unhappy. However, infant monkeys who cannot see, hear and smell their mothers, but are allowed to touch them are much happier.

Our sense of touch is actually a mix of at least four distinct skin senses—pressure, warmth, cold and pain. Touching various spots on the skin with a soft hair, a warm or cool wire, and the point of a pin reveals that some spots are especially sensitive to pressure, others to warmth, others to cold, still others to pain. Other skin sensations are variations of the basic ones:

- A tickling sensation is felt when adjacent pressure spots are stroked.
- An itching sensation is created by repeated gentle stroking of a pain spot.
- A sense of wetness is triggered by touching dry, cold metal.
- A feeling of hot is produced by stimulating nearby cold

and warmth spots.

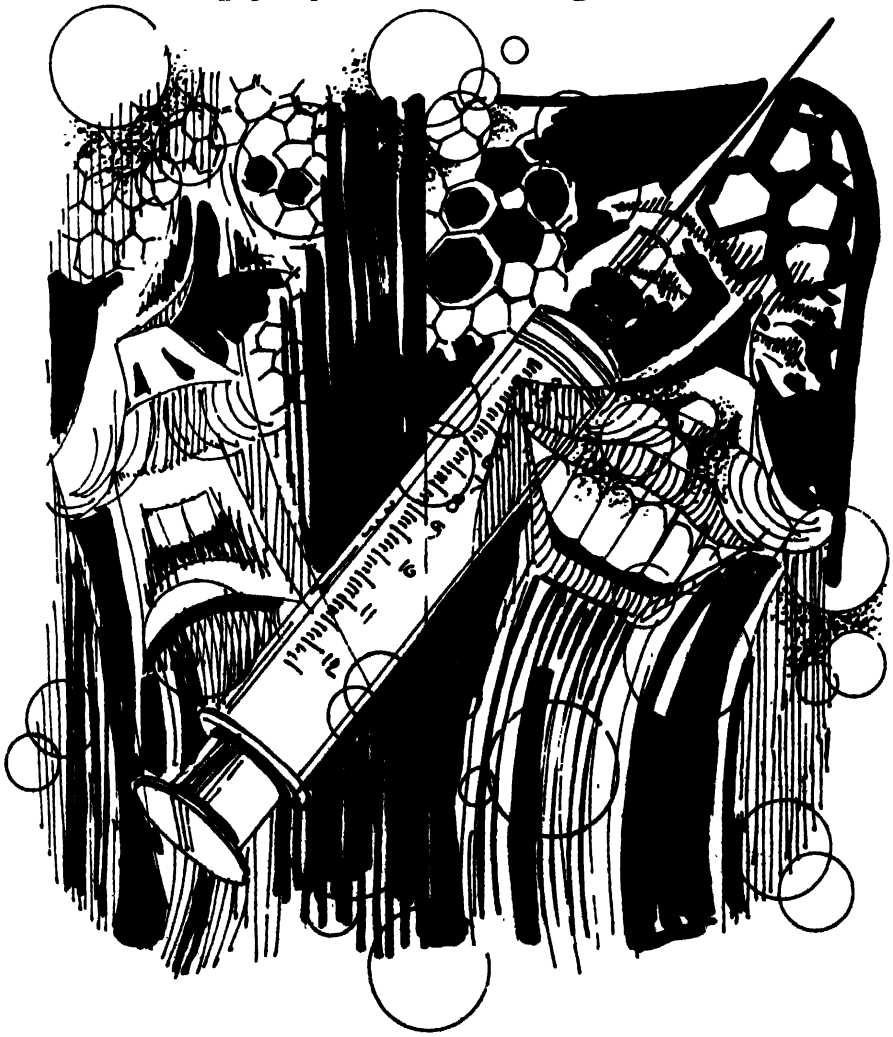
Pain is our body's way of telling us that something is wrong. It draws our attention to a burn, a break, or a rupture, and tells us to change our behaviour immediately. The few people who are born without the ability to feel pain may experience severe injury without ever being alerted by pain's danger signals. More numerous are those who endure chronic pain. The suffering of people with persistent or recurring backaches, arthritis, headaches, and cancer-related pain makes us think of two questions: What is pain? How can pain be controlled?

Like sight, hearing, smell and taste, pain is not only a property of the senses—of the region where we feel it—but of the brain as well. The pain system in our bodies is not located in a simple neural cord running from sensing device to a definite spot in the brain. Moreover, there is no one type of stimulus that triggers pains (like light triggers vision), and there are no special receptors for pain either.

In 1965, psychologist Ronald Melzack put forth a theory on pain known as the "Gate-Control Theory of Pain". He proposed that the spinal cord contains a sort of neurological "gate" that either blocks or allows pain signals to pass on to the brain. The spinal cord contains small fibres that conduct most pain signals, and larger fibres that conduct most other sensory signals. When a tissue in our body is injured, the small fibres activate and open the neural gate, and we feel pain. Large fibre activity closes the pain gate, turning pain off.

Thus one way to treat chronic pain is to stimulate "gate-closing" activity, by massage or even by acupuncture, in the large neural fibres. For example, ice on a bruise serves not only to control swelling but also to trigger cold messages that close the gate on the pain signals.

Distracting people with pleasant images ("Think of the wonderful time we had in the Diwali Mela") or drawing their attention away from the painful stimulation ("Why don't you start counting backwards from 1000?") is an especially effective way to increase pain tolerance. This is seen very often in hospitals when a nurse distracts needle-shy patients with chatter and asks them to look away when inserting a needle for an injection. Even hospital patients with a pleasing window view of natural vegetation have a similar relaxing effect and are distracted from the pain they are going through.



The treasure of Kumbher

Story : Krishna Narayan
Illustrations : Nilabho Dhar Chowdhury



Ismail Beg tells Prithiviraj to escort a prisoner out of Kumbher. Convinced that the prisoner is Jai Singh, Prithviraj gives Senor Noronha the information. Senor Noronha plans to capture Jai Singh. Prithviraj meets Chandravati and promises her that Jai Singh will be free soon. Since Duler Singh is drunk, Chandravati approaches Samba and asks him to carry a note to her father. Samba is killed and the note reaches Ismail Beg who suspects Janki Devi of plotting against him. Janki Devi tells him that the note is in Chandravati's handwriting. Ismail Beg decides to keep to his original plan of shifting Jai Singh.

Part 13

THE MOMENT Janki Devi was hustled away to the palace, Duler Singh rushed towards the horsecart. Even as he hurried through the woods, over brambles and dew-sodden grass, he prayed he was not too late. He found Chandravati swaddled in her blanket feeding the horses. She jerked upright when he burst into view.

"I have bad news, Princess!"he gasped. "Ismail Beg's men have destroyed Janki Devi's residence and taken her away!"

"What?"

"I saw it with my own eyes. Nobody knows why, but I heard someone say that Samba is dead!"

Chandravati stood still, her brain racing for an explanation. Samba had been caught red-handed with her letter and put to death by Ismail Beg! Janki Devi, being Samba's employer, was automatically the prime suspect. It would not be long before they got on to Chandravati's trail. What would happen then to the plan to shift Jai Singh? Once again the thought of taking Prithviraj's help crossed her mind, but Prithviraj was simply too honest and innocent of guile to deal with the likes of rascals such as Ismail Beg and Kunwar Singh. No, she would have to act independently. She would keep a watch on the dungeons every night to find out her brother's fate.

It was Friday, the night of the new moon. It was close to midnight, and bitterly cold.

All was still but for the stray hoot of an owl and a flutter of its wings.

Prithviraj sat on the floor of his cell, pondering over the vagaries of his fortunes. What a terrible mess he had got himself into! He had set out of home fired with the ambition of becoming a soldier. of winning laurels at the point of his sword. Instead, he had landed in prison.

A rat crept up to nibble at his toe. Prithviraj jangled the chains around his legs to scare it away. The noise brought the guard running. Prithviraj looked at the figure chained to the wall opposite. The man's frame had shrunk and wasted away, the eyes were shut, the welts on his body had burst out in sores. Prithviraj was dismayed. Was this human wreck indeed the Prince of Kumbher? Alas, the cruelty of fate!

Prithviraj realised that his recent experiences had made him wise to the ways of the world. He felt he could trust no one any longer, not even Senor Noronha.

But the question that worried Prithviraj by far was one that concerned himself—what was to happen to him? What did Ismail Beg have in mind?

While Prithviraj was thus engaged, two men came down the steps. They were dressed in black, and though indistinguishable from the background, a closer look revealed that one of them was tall and hefty, the other slighter in build.

The figures walked swiftly past the garden and turned into the path that led beyond the stables to the dungeons. The guard at the barricade roused himself at the sound of footsteps and drew his sword.

The smaller of the two men threw back the cowl that covered his head. The guard stiffened as he recognised Ismail Beg. Ismail Beg strode wordlessly past him, followed by Abdel Khan. They descended the flight of stone steps into the dim, cavernous hall below. They turned the corner to come face to face with Prithviraj and Jai Singh. There was a pause as the men eyed each other. "You did not expect me to stick to my plan, did you?" said Ismail Beg with a grin. Prithviraj did not reply.

Ismail Beg slowly drew a dagger from his waistband. He placed the tip of the blade against Prithviraj's throat. He flicked his wrist. A spot of blood sprang out.

"I ask you for the last time. To whom have you revealed the plan?" He pressed the point of the dagger a little deeper.

Prithviraj stared back at him without flinching. "You would not dare to do that if I were armed," he said.

"You are too insignificant to taste my wrath," Ismail Beg said at last. "I have no time for you now, anyway." He turned to Abdel Khan. "So, it shall be as we have discussed. I shall be Jai Singh and you shall be Prithviraj, escorting me out of the dungeons. If there is danger on the way, as I expect there will be, we shall be prepared for it." His teeth flashed in a grin of anticipation. The sound of horses drawing up

above reached his ears. He threw a glance at the unconscious prince, hanging by his chains. He jerked a finger at Abdel Khan. Together they ran up the steps to the entrance.

A cold wind was blowing. Ismail Beg took the reins from the guard and swung into the saddle. The horse bucked when it felt the weight of the rider, and Ismail Beg wrestled for control. He and Abdel Khan trotted towards the palace gate. Together they rode into the night, Ismail Beg hunched low to disguise his profile. They crossed Janki Devi's house and went down the main road.

A girl hidden in the undergrowth beyond the fence had been watching their every move. When the sound of hoofbeats receded into the distance, she emerged from the shrubbery and moved towards the stables. A second figure followed her.

Chandravati knew that neither of the horsemen who had left the scene was her brother. Every nerve in her body still tingled with the discovery. It had struck her the moment she had seen them astride their horses.

Chandravati had ridden alongside Jai Singh for years. She could recognise the swing of his body, his stance in the saddle. Even with the distance and the near total darkness, Chandravati was certain that neither rider was Jai Singh.



If that were so, then Jai Singh was still in prison! Then there was no need to follow the horsemen, whoever they were.

Chandravati grasped Duler Singh's hand and dragged him behind her. "What are you doing, Princess?" whispered Duler Singh in panic. "Have you taken leave of your senses?" Instead of a reply, he found himself being tugged through the undergrowth. They reached the dungeons. On the bottom step sat a guard, his back towards them.

Chandravati glanced at Duler Singh, indicating the next move with her eyes. Flattening himself against the shadows, he descended. He picked up a loose block of granite that lay in his path. Then, with a noiseless bound, he reached the guard and brought the stone down on his skull.

Chandravati and Duler Singh hurried into the hall. They searched wildly till they came upon Jai Singh, and in the adjoining cell, Prithviraj.

Chandravati stood still, aghast. In the flickering flames cast by the wall-mounted torches, Jai Singh looked almost a ghost. And what was Prithviraj doing here? Wasn't

he Ismail Beg's right hand man, chosen to escort her brother out of Kumbher?

Prithviraj clambered to his feet. "Chandravati!" She did not seem to hear. She ran up to Jai Singh, her face a mask of horror. With trembling hands, she tugged at his chains.

"Set me free so I can be of help!" said Prithviraj. Duler Singh went back to search for the guard and returned with the keys to the cell. In moments, he had rid Prithviraj of his bonds. It took them a while longer to take Jai Singh off the wall and lay him gently on the floor.

"What do we do now?" asked Duler Singh.

"Why, we hide him! And ourselves too, of course," said Chandravati.

"But where? The prince is in no condition to be taken very far."

"I know a safe place," said Chandravati. "A place right here in the palace, where Ismail Beg and his men would not think of looking in a hundred years!

* * *

Ismail Beg was sunk low in the saddle, his head resting on his chest, occasionally falling forward as if in fatigue. Only the eyes that flashed beneath his cowl and the whiteness of the fist that held the reins betrayed his alertness. Abdel Khan followed a few paces behind. The night was silent except for the sound of hoofs.



Suddenly, out of the corner of his eye Ismail Beg caught a noise and a movement, a little behind him to the left. It was a pronounced rustle of bushes, and the horse heard it too, for it threw its head back and snorted. Ismail Beg drew his sword.

Two men sprang out of the darkness and clawed upon his back. Prepared though he was, Ismail Beg was not able to defend himself. His body bent backwards like a bow as the men strained to pull him off the saddle. With a jerk he fell to the ground.

As for Abdel Khan, he was caught completely off guard. One man was now tugging at the bridle of his stampeding horse, for Abdel had been unseated in the first assault. Only his burly frame and his soldier's instinct had saved him from being kicked to death.

Ismail Beg attempted to rise when one of his assailants aimed a blow at his head. Ismail Beg saw it coming and rolled away, but it caught him in the throat. A ball of pain exploded in his gullet; he retched, and staggered to his feet. He saw Abdel Khan with his arms around one man while using his legs against another. There was a thud as the fellow was sent crashing into the bushes. The assailants regrouped and charged again. It was an unequal fight, for there were too many of them and Ismail Beg and Abdel Khan soon found themselves spread-eagled on the ground, heads and legs pinned.

A tall, erect figure appeared from behind the shrubbery. He inspected the prone figure by the light of the torch which one of his men lit for him. "Where is the prince?" he said at last.

Ismail Beg took in the tight-fitting riding clothes, the horsewhip with its ebony handle and brass head, the pale face that gleamed in the torch-flame. He knew it was Senor Noronha. He said nothing. Senor Noronha tapped him on the shin with the butt of his whip. "I asked you a question," he said.

"I am Ismail Beg. Allow me to rise, and you shall be answered."

Senor Noronha motioned to his men to release Ismail Beg and Abdel Khan.

"I changed my mind at the last moment. Jai Singh remains in prison. And who, may I ask, told you of my plans tonight?" said Ismail Beg.

Senor Noronha regarded him gravely. He did not answer the question. "I think, I will hold you hostage," he said. "Your life in return for Jai Singh."

Ismail Beg let out a chuckle. "So you threaten Ismail Beg in his own estate? Incredible! Senor, may I, instead, suggest a course of action of mutual benefit to ourselves?" Senor Noronha was silent, so Ismail Beg went on. "We may be strangers, but beneath the skin we are the same. We are adventurers who live by the sword. Why should we care for Kumbher and the royal family? Help me find the treasure, Senor. We will share the booty and return whence we came."

In spite of himself, Senor Noronha was impressed with Ismail Beg and his perception. Indeed, he could scarcely have expressed his thoughts better. He dipped into his pocket and took out the ring that Prithviraj had given him. "This belongs to Raja Balwant Singh," he said, turning it so that the facets of the red stone glinted in the light. "If you take me to Jai Singh, maybe I can convince him to reveal to me the secret of the treasure."

"Be my guest!" said Ismail Beg grandly. He whistled for his horse. "Abdel Khan," he said, "the Senor and I are going ahead. You can follow with the men." And they set off.

Ismail Beg and Senor Noronha dismounted in front of the dungeons. The first light of dawn was beginning to light up the sky.

The moment Ismail Beg saw the guard sprawled at the bottom of the stairs he knew something was very wrong. He took the steps three at a time, leaping over the body. He sped to the cells and stopped short. Two pairs of chains dangled from the wall. Another pair lay on the cell floor.

Both Jai Singh and Prithviraj had vanished!

* * *

It was market day in Kumbher. There was brisk traffic at the east gate. They failed to notice a grizzled old man on horseback enter the gate and join the melee.

Raja Balwant Singh let his mount amble along, careful not to look like one in a hurry. He knew fully well the risk he was taking, the fate that awaited him if he was recognised and caught.

"Uncle!" The king stopped and looked about him. He saw nobody.

"Uncle!" Again the loud whisper. A hand appeared among the shrubbery, beckoning him to the side of the road. He caught the flash of a face; it was Kunwar Singh. He snatched at the bridle and led the horse deeper into the greenery. The king found himself in the far corner of Janki Devi's residence.

"What madness is this?" asked Kunwar Singh, "I recognised you the moment I saw you, anyone could have done so. Why did you come back? This place is crawling with Ismail Beg's men."

"Now you can hand me over to Ismail Beg and collect your reward," said the king wearily.

"Uncle, this is a different Kunwar Singh from the one you know! That traitor is dead for ever! I have learnt my lesson."

Raja Balwant Singh shook his head. "What new game is this? I am too old and tired to take any more. Where is my son?" He sighed. "When you throw me in prison, be kind enough to put me next to him."

Kunwar Singh clutched the king's feet. Tears flowed freely down his cheeks. "Kill me, but don't torture me with these words," he pleaded. "I have erred greatly, and I beg your forgiveness. I was a fool to trust that man."

"Where is my son? Where is my daughter?"

Kunwar Singh wrung his hands. "I wish to God I knew," he said. "Jai Singh was in the cells till last night. This morning he was found missing. Ismail Beg and Senor Noronha are searching high and low for him. My mother has been beaten black and blue, but I know she knows nothing. As for Chandravati, nobody has seen her in Kumbher."

The king sat still. His suspicion that Senor Noronha was no friend had been proved beyond doubt. Now he had only one aim—that of saving the lives of his children. If he had to surrender the treasure of his forefathers for the cause, so be it. "Take me to Ismail Beg," he said.

Kunwar Singh looked horrified. "Impossible! That mad devil will tear you apart! Uncle, there is only one way. Your commanders are lying low, waiting with their men to rally round you. I am ready to shed every drop of blood for your sake. My troops are at your service. We will give battle to Ismail Beg. You hide while I find out the latest news of Jai Singh and Chandravati. This is no trap, Uncle. Trust me."

That afternoon a small figure clothed in white slipped out from behind the outhouses and wended its way towards the rear of the palace. It was the old nurse who looked after the king's bedridden great-aunt.

Only when she let herself into the little room at the far end of the ground floor and closed the door behind her did she dare breathe freely.

"Here is some food," she said. "It was all I could manage." She uncovered a bowl of cold rice hidden in the folds of her dress.

Chandravati and Prithviraj were squatting on the floor. Jai Singh lay unconscious in a corner. As for being discovered, Chandravati had been proved right. They had not been caught—as yet.

(To be continued)



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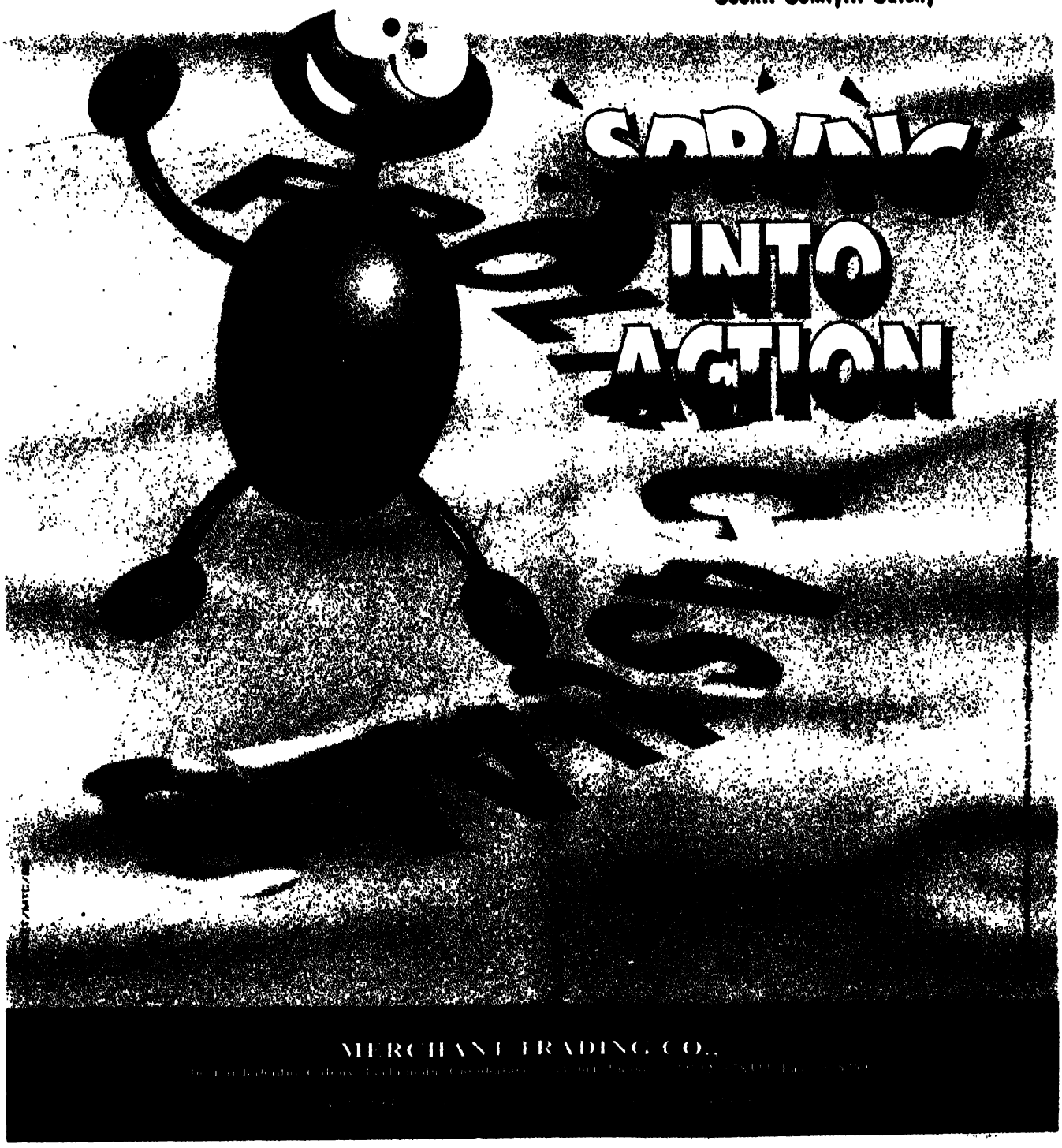


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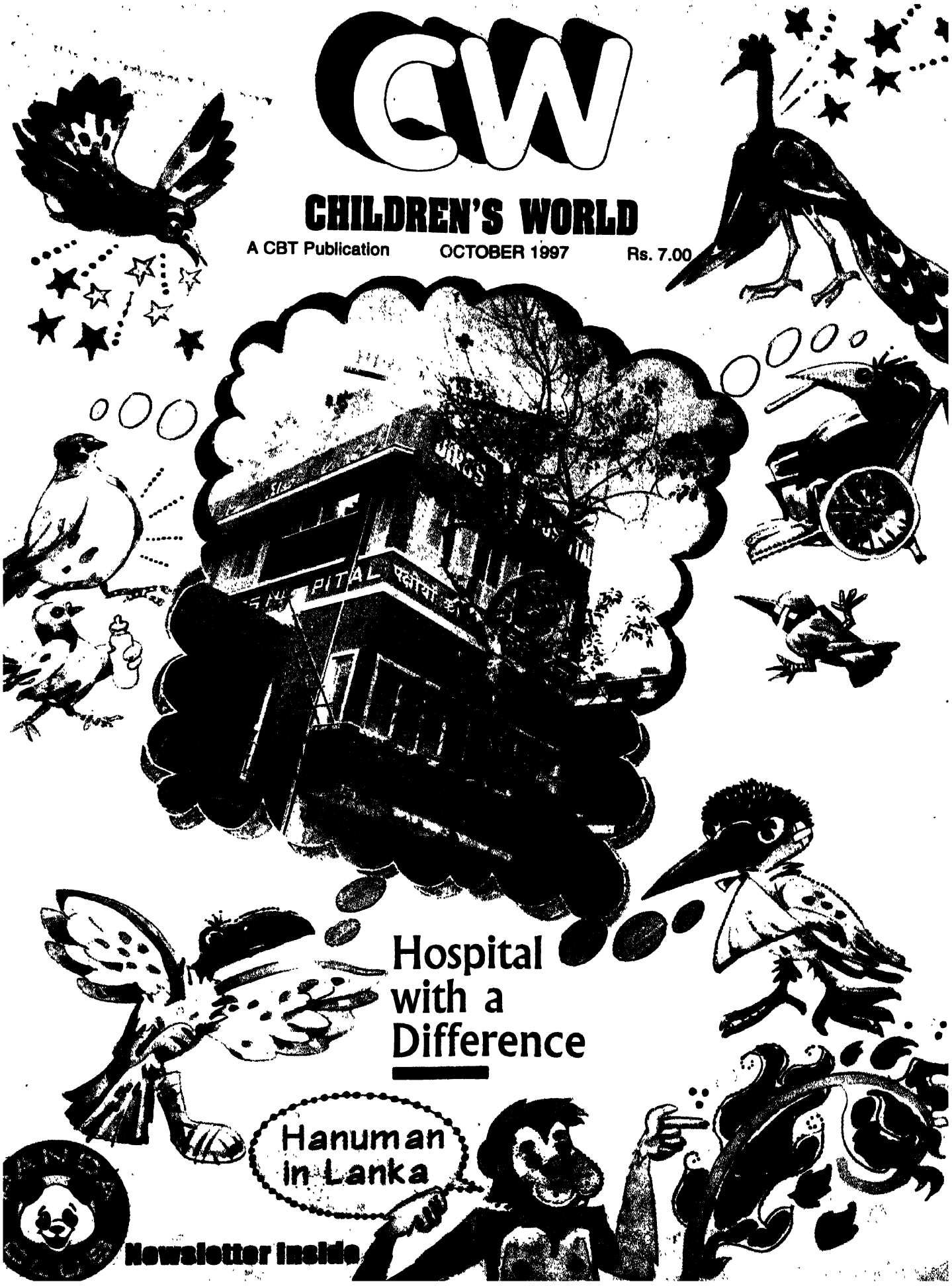
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Newsletter inside

Shankar's International Children's Competition (SICC) 1998

RULES

1. The competition is open to children all over the world. They should have been born on or after January 1, 1982.
2. *There is no entry fee.*
3. Competitors are free to choose the theme/subject they are interested in, or like most, for their paintings/drawings/writings.
4. Each entry should be certified by the parent/guardian/teacher as the original, unaided work of the competitor done during 1997. Entries should be an individual effort and NOT a combined work.
5. Every entry should carry the following information in English and in BLOCK LETTERS, at the back of the painting/drawing, or at the end of the written work: *' First name ' Middle name ' Surname ' Boy or Girl ' Date of Birth ' Nationality ' Full postal address ' Subject/title of the entry*
6. No entry will be returned. The copyright of all entries will rest with Shankar's International Children's Competition.
7. All packets should be pre-paid/adequately stamped and mailed directly to reach:
   Shankar's International Children's Competition
   Nehru House
   4 Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg
   New Delhi-110002
8. Entries sent by air cargo will not be accepted.
9. The last date for receipt of entries is *October 31, 1997*

PAINTINGS/DRAWINGS

10. The drawings can be in any medium.
11. The size of each entry should NOT be less than 30 x 40 cm in size.
12. A competitor may submit upto 6 entries. They should NOT be mounted/framed.

WRITTEN WORK

13. Only entries in ENGLISH will be considered. Translations from other languages do not qualify for the competition.
14. Entries may be in the form of poems, plays, short stories, essays, descriptive writing, and the like.
15. A competitor may submit upto 6 entries. They should be in a neat handwriting or typed.

PRIZES

16. The entries will be judged by the organizers with the help of a jury. The judges' decision will be final.
17. The following prizes are offered:
    i. The President of India's Gold Medal for the best painting/drawing.
    ii. The Shankar's Award for the best written work.
    iii. 24 Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Gold Medals for the next best paintings/drawings/written work.
    iv. About 400 Silver Medals and 400 prizes.
    v. Certificates of Merit to deserving entries.
18. Results will be announced in July 1998. Prizewinners will be informed individually by post.
19. The best entries will be published in Shankar's *Children's Art Number*, Volume 49. Selected entries will also appear in CW—*Children's World.*

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A CHILD'S BEST FRIEND

OCTOBER 1997
VOL. XXX NO. 7



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Dear Readers,

"Freedom, to me, means flying free like a bird in the sky," declares many a young person. But how free are birds? Not just from man-made cages but also from worldly suffering like injury or illness? Yes, birds too fall ill and, what is comforting is that, they can be nursed back to health by man... which is precisely what is being done at the Charity Birds' Hospital in Delhi, since 1957. To mark the World Wildlife Week in October, Abhijit Chandra Chandra files this fascinating account of how thousands and thousands of birds are 'treated' here every year, and then released.

Later in October we will faithfully consign 'evil' to the flames by burning effigies of Ravana, his brother, Kumbhakarna and son, Meghanaad to celebrate Dussehra.

Centuries ago, when Lord Rama vanquished the scholar king, Ravana, 'Ramarajya' or a golden era followed. Now, however, evil rears its ugly head so regularly that we need to re-enact the burning of Ravana every year to prove the triumph of good over evil. We seem to forget that contained within the *Ramayana* are shining examples of goodness, devotion, and obedience. Were we to make these a part of our daily lives, evil would have no place to breed or thrive.

Hanuman's selfless devotion to Lord Rama and his efforts in helping him trace his wife, Seeta, form a significant part of the epic. A lively play script, specially designed to be performed during school hours is CW's way of making the Dussehra celebrations more meaningful and relevant to our day to day lives.

Unless we make this effort, Ravana will continue to burn in vain for the evil we unleash into the world today.

Happy celebrating
and reading
Editor

Dear Editor,
One of the main attractions which differentiated CW from a local magazine was that some pages were spared for a pen-pal column. Hope you will again start publishing pen-pals before I lose my interest in *Children's World*.

Vijay,
Vizianagaram

Dear Editor,
I am a regular subscriber of *Children's World*. I want to congratulate you on designing such superb covers. The front cover of the July issue was really beautiful. I used it as a poster in my room. I have also got two pen-pals from your pen-pals columns. Please keep publishing informative articles like *Going Places* and *Open Mind*. Also keep publishing Perky's *A Letter to You*, it's really very funny. I wish *Children's World* success.

Nir Sharma,
Guwahati

Dear Editor,
I refer to the "Colour Contest" appearing on page 48 of the July '97 issue of *Children's World*. I feel that it would be in the best interest of the readers if such contests are published on the back of an advertisement page so that the reading material is not affected.

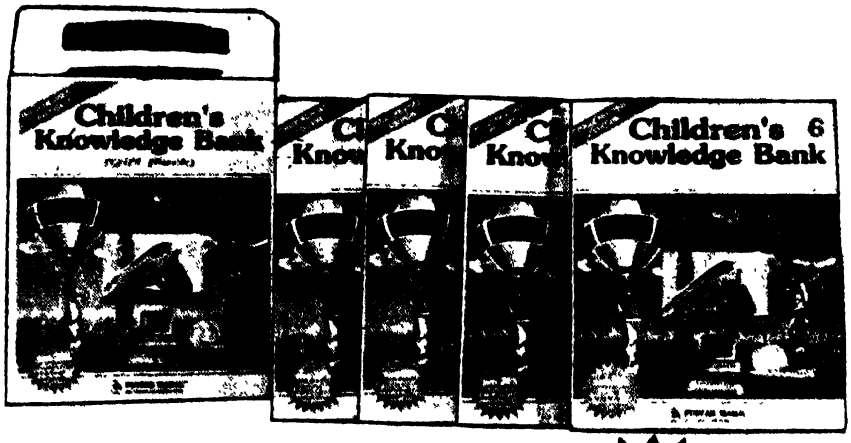
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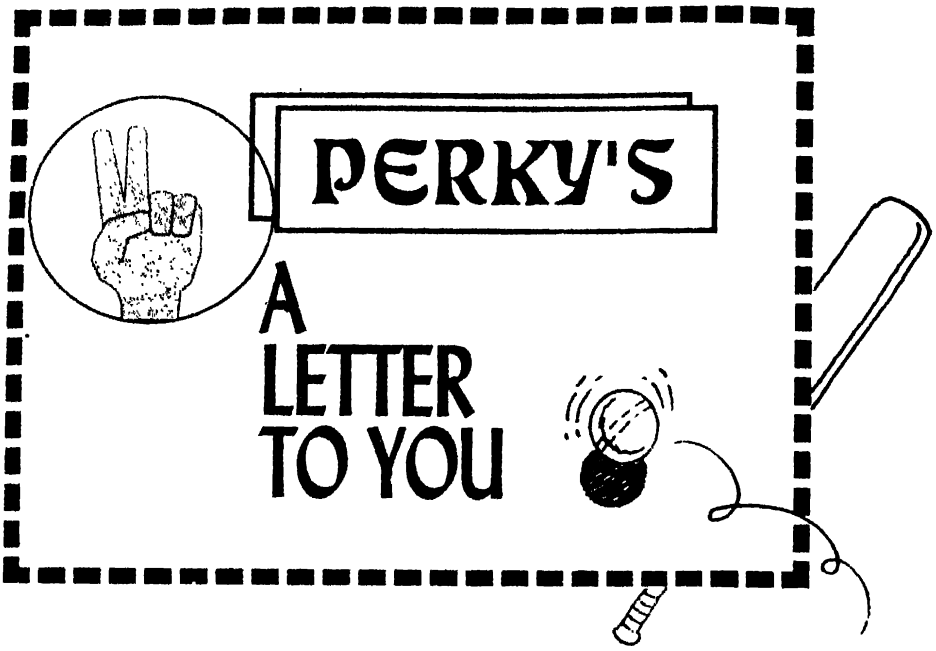
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My dear parks and games,

It is only a small park, I agree. It has place only for two benches, one see-saw, one slide or for one cricket pitch and half a cricket team. So if you want to play cricket in the park, you have to be there very early before the bench sitters and the see-saw and slide players arrive. You have to mark your pitch and place your fielders near the see-saw and the slide and seat the batting team on the two benches before you are safe. If you are even a bit late because you had to look for your shoes and socks or because you wanted an extra toast, then you are finished. The see-saw and the slide are full of giggling children and the benches are crammed with grandparents.

I know parks are also meant for giggling children and talkative grandparents. But the children and the grandparents can sit day in and day out on the benches and play on the see-saw when we have school. We come to the park only when we have holidays. At least then for a few hours, we should be allowed to play cricket.

Actually, to tell you the truth, the giggling children and the chatting grandparents are not the real problem. The biggest problem is other cricket teams and most particularly



Raghu's cricket team.

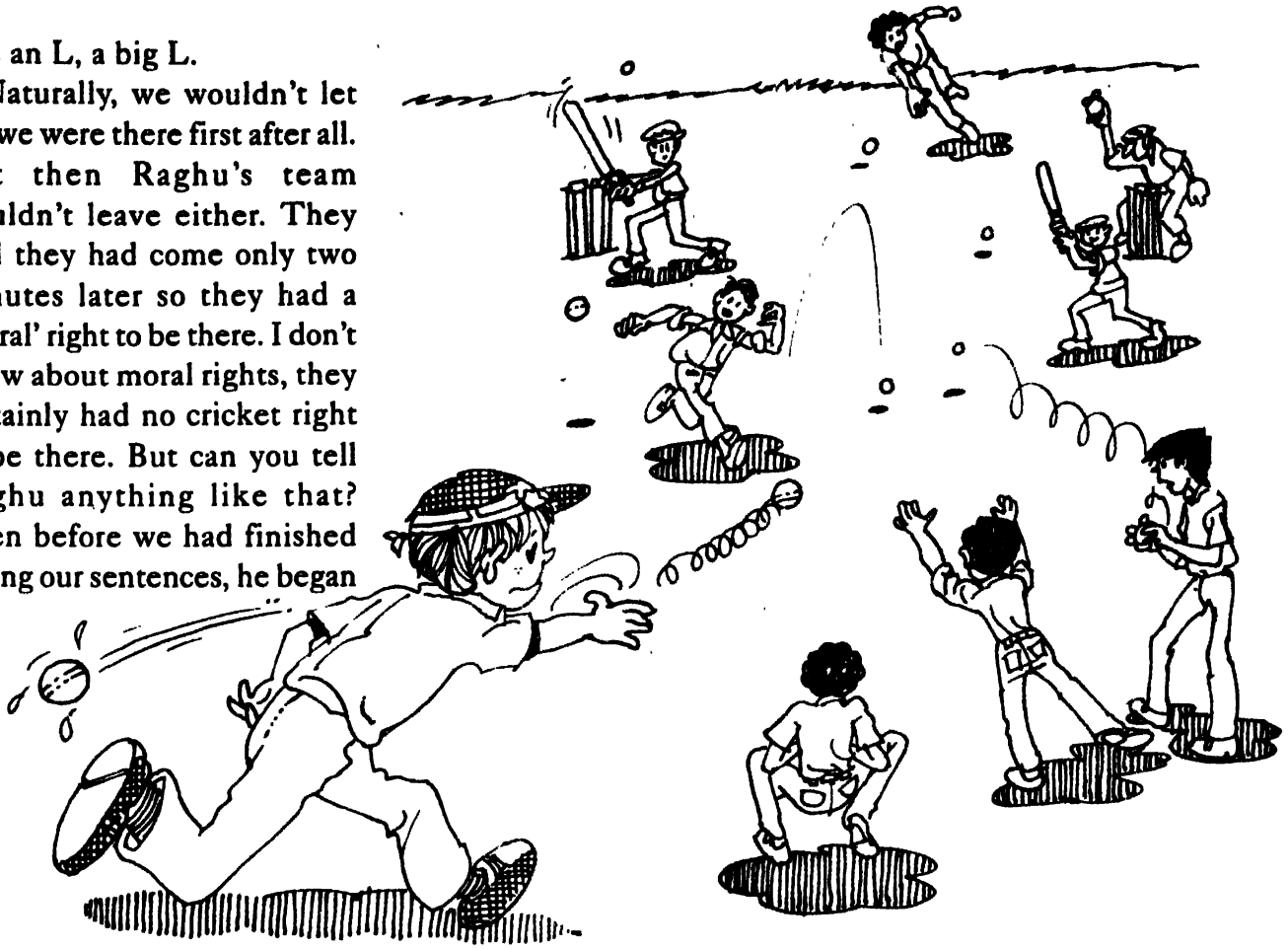
"Oh, so you are not in Raghu's team?" I hear you ask. And my answer is, "Why should I be in Raghu's cricket team? Are you mad? You think I want to be in a team where the captain thinks he is the best batsman and the best bowler and the best fielder and the best wicket keeper in the whole world? You think I want to be in a team where the captain keeps commenting about everybody else in this team and calls them nitwits and asses? You think... anyway I'm not in Raghu's team."

So as I was saying, one has to reach the park before Raghu's team arrives. And usually our team does manage to do that. You know what Raghu is like—by the time he finds what he has found, our team is already deep into the game—almost two overs have been bowled. And Raghu's team after standing around for a little while and calling us all manner of things, has had to leave and look for another place.

But last Sunday, something unexpected happened. Raghu's team arrived as we were marking the pitch. And you know what they did? Instead of going away and leaving us in peace, they began to put up their wickets too, perpendicular to ours! Can you imagine? We had two cricket pitches on the same ground

like an L, a big L.

Naturally, we wouldn't let go, we were there first after all. But then Raghu's team wouldn't leave either. They said they had come only two minutes later so they had a 'moral' right to be there. I don't know about moral rights, they certainly had no cricket right to be there. But can you tell Raghu anything like that? Even before we had finished saying our sentences, he began



to bowl to his batsman. And before we could do anything, his batsmen began to run between their wickets.

What could we do? We began our game too. Our batsmen took their positions and I started the bowling. Wham, the batsman hit the ball. It went straight to the boundary. But wait, whose ball was it? Was it our ball or the other team's ball? Which ball had been hit? Which fielder was picking up which ball? So the two games went on, the confusion got worse and worse. There seemed to be a hundred balls all over the park, twelve bowlers and twenty four batsmen and a thousand fielders. The bowler was always bowling and the batsmen always batting and the fielders picking up balls without a pause.

Wickets fell but we didn't know which ball did the trick. Runs were run and we didn't know which ball to chase. We flew all round the park, got tangled up with the wrong team, fell down, picked ourselves up and got more and more mad.

Finally, the war started. And the war started because Raghu was batting and he was clean bowled. And he accused us, can you imagine, he accused us of clean bowling him! Now, why should we do that? And if we did that—well, that meant we had a first rate bowler.

I think that remark was what made Raghu leave finally. The remark that our team had a bowler who could bowl to a perpendicular pitch and get the batsman out. Oh, how we raved about it and went on and on and on. Raghu got so disgusted, he took his bat and stomped out.

After that, we had a lovely game. His team joined ours and we had quite an easy game with one pitch, one bowler, two batsmen and one ball and without Raghu.

That is the way the game has to be played, I assure you. Without Raghu.

With bowling pride
Perky

A hospital for birds? An entire multi-storey structure devoted towards the treatment of winged creatures? It's true. The hospital has been functioning since 1957. Through this article, CW salutes birds, bird lovers and the special people who man and have manned this hospital. This feature is CW's special tribute to the World Wildlife Week that comes off every year from October 1 to 7.

A HOSPITAL WITH A + DIFFERENCE +

Text : Abhijit Chandra Chandra Illustrations : Ajanta Guhathakurta

OPPOSITE the historic Lahori Gate of the Red Fort, across the Netaji Subhash Marg, in Delhi, stands the Shri Digamber Jain Lal Mandir. Within the temple premises is the three-storey 'Charity Birds' Hospital'.

"If you love birds, you must make efforts to help them," says 47-year-old Sukha Nand Jain, Secretary, Charitable Birds' Hospital. It is his seventeenth year with the institution. The 'efforts' of Jain and his men are three fold: treatment within the hospital, treatment by mail and treatment over telephone.



An 'Out Patients' Department' (O.P.D.) and an 'Indoor Section' are part of the hospital. Bird owners bring their ailing pets to the former for medication. Initially, the owners may be told to come everyday; as the creature gets better, they may come once a week.

The Indoor Section admits sick birds. Owners of such patients are given a printed receipt. These birds are never returned but are released after they recover. This is mentioned on the receipt.

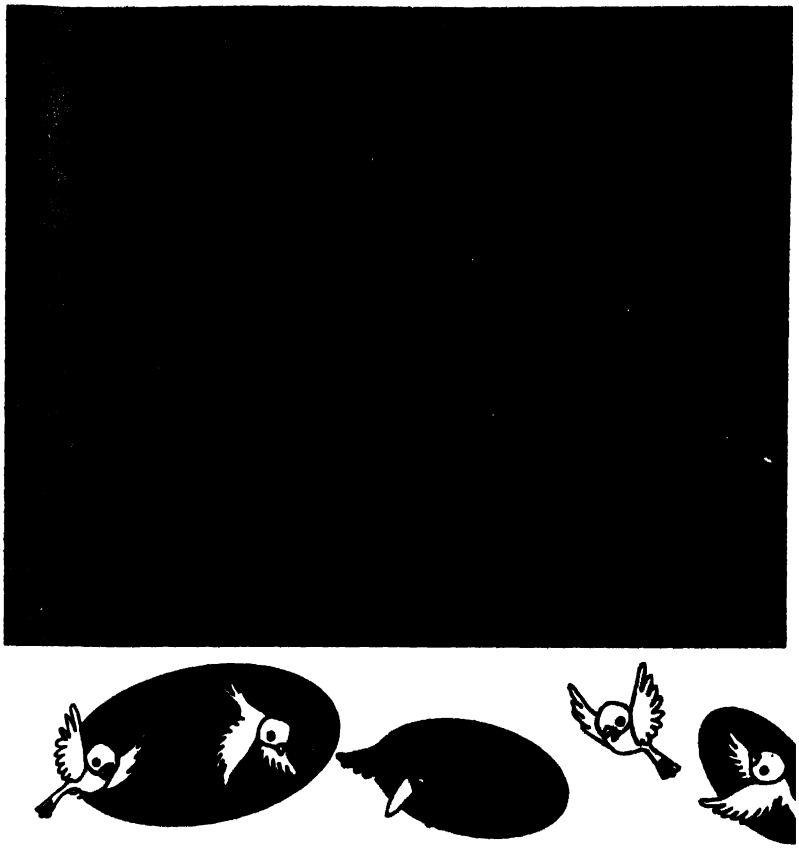
Two hundred and seventy-two special cages serve as Intensive Care Units (I.C.U.s)! Fractures and other bone problems are taken care of in a separate orthopaedic section. "When a bird's condition improves by 70 per cent, it is transferred to the general ward," says Dr. Yadav. There are four such wards and a small coryza ward. Pigeons afflicted with pox are isolated in a separate area on the top floor since this disease is contagious and spreads rapidly to other birds. Alternate dressing of these patients is done besides necessary medication.

There are units for young birds and physically handicapped ones too. Such inmates are looked after round the clock and are hand-fed at regular intervals. The general wards are interconnected at the top so that the birds have sufficient flying space. Several marble shelves, situated above the window level, function as resting places for these creatures. Their activity is observed for some more days and they are then released. This is generally done in case of pigeons. Similarly, other patients are examined from time to time and freed when healthy. Birds are released at least twice a week and at different places.

Peacocks, ducks, swans, parrots, are liberated at Shanti Vana. Other birds, mostly pigeons, are freed from the roof



The Charity Bird's Hospital



of the hospital itself. Rabbits, which are also admitted and treated in the institution, are released at Ahinsa Sthala. Pigeons are reported to have reached their original homes 8-10 kms away.

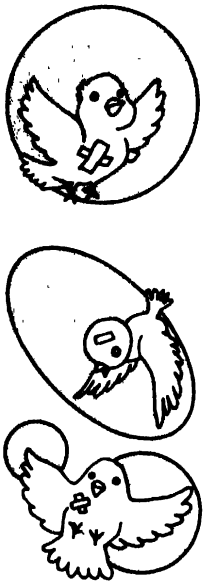
All birds are dewormed prior to their release. Similarly, once here, the birds are given medicated dips to rid them of ectoparasites, if necessary. A specially designed bathing pool in one of the general wards serves this purpose. During summer, even healthy birds use this pool to overcome the heat. Coolers and heaters are used depending on the season. Speakers have been installed in every ward and box of the hospital, including the doctors' chamber.

The *Namukar mantra* is played for two to three hours every morning and evening. This *mantra* has a religious significance in the Jain community. The 23rd Tirthankar, Parsvanath, is believed to have recited the *mantra* to a pair of injured snakes and a certain Jeevandhar Swami had also chanted the *mantra* in the ears of a wounded dog.

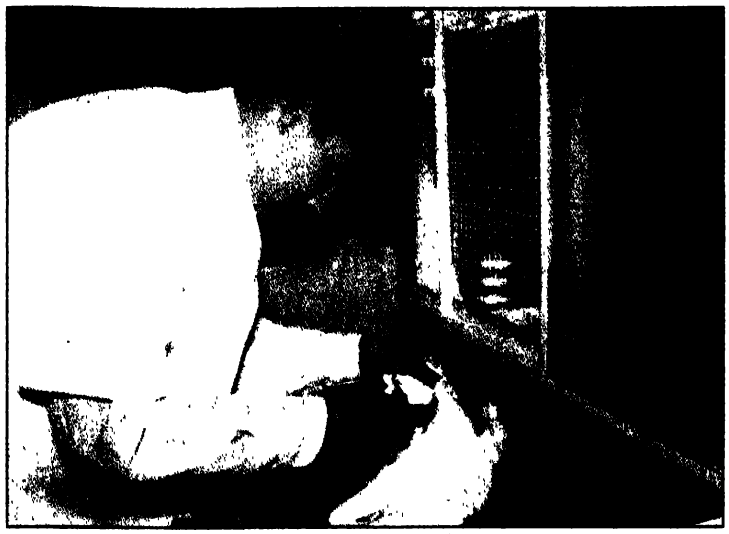


Vitamin B-complex fluid is being mixed in the water

Food in the general ward comprises of mixed grain. Vitamin B-Complex fluid is mixed in the water. Marble chips are also fed to the pigeons, along with the grain. Since birds don't have teeth, the chips crush the hard grains they eat to finer pieces during the gizzard's churning movement.



Many birds don't go far even when released. The roof of the hospital is marked with droppings, and several winged creatures may be seen perching atop the adjoining temple. There is no threat from preying cats. During the rainy season the birds remain inside special cages built at regular intervals atop the second floor corridor. These cages open to the outside. The roof has a huge wire-mesh model of a pigeon. Several aluminium rods act as a resting place for birds who come for the grain and water kept there.



Nursing the patients back to health

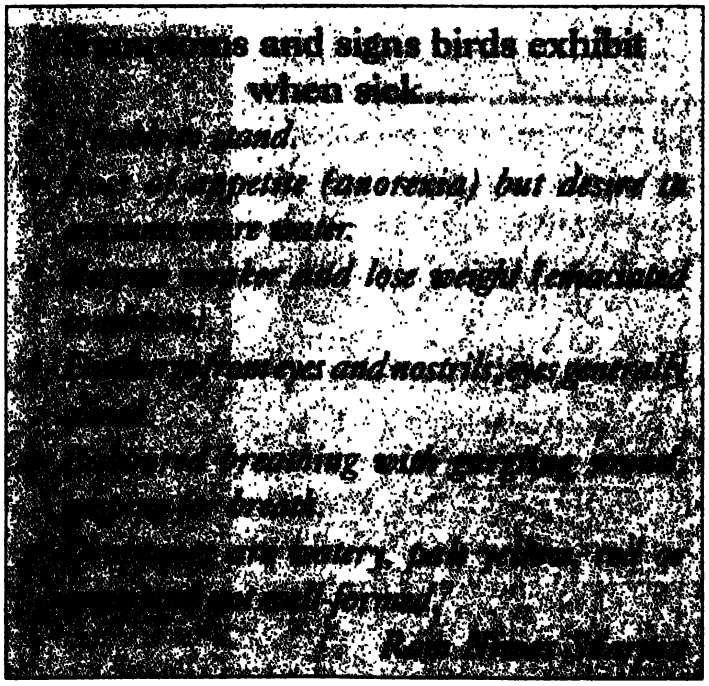
In treatment by mail, bird lovers unable to come to the hospital write about their pets' ailments. The institution replies, stating the necessary steps to be taken besides the medicine to be given. There are 150–200 cases of 'postal medicine' per year. Generally, emergency cases are treated over telephone. On enquiry, the hospital staff details the treatment and management of the suffering creatures. The Charity Birds' Hospital is situated on the right side of the Lal Mandir, facing it. The ground floor of the building is partly used as a storage area. It also serves as the office chamber of the Secretary and Manager, and the venue for discussions between the management and the doctors. The first floor houses the doctors' chamber, laboratory and dispensary.

As for procedures that are applied while nursing the unusual patients back to health—





Grain mixed with marble chips being fed



A brief history

In 1926, the Jain community in Delhi, under the guidance of Acharya Shanti Sagar Jee Maharaj, began to treat injured birds. The efforts of a certain Lala Lachu Mal Jee resulted in a small hospital three years later, at a site other than the present one. Due to a gradual increase in the number of patients and the efforts of samaritans, the hospital was shifted to a bhawan *within the Lal Mandir premises.*

Subsequently there arose the need for a spacious building, and the foundation stone of the present structure was laid on April 18, 1957. Initially the hospital was headed by Dr. Shiv Prasad. In 1960, the institution came under the Pracheen Shree Aggarwal Digamber Jain Panchayat and was looked after by Mr. Suresh Chand Jain Gotewale under a Management Committee.

Eight years later, the Ayurvedic system of treatment was replaced by allopathy, coinciding with the appointment of Dr. M.S. Bawa. Mr. Chakresh Jain served as Manager, Charity Birds' Hospital from 1968-1977. From time to time new Management Committees were framed. At present, the institution's staff includes a Secretary, a qualified doctor, an Extension Officer, a compounder and half a dozen attendants.



Pullorum or Bacillary white diarrhoea

This common disease affects pigeons, geese, turkey, ducks, guinea fowl, sparrows, pheasants etc. Salmonella Pullorum *is the causative agent. Young birds are affected by the acute form of the ailment, whilst adults are victims of the chronic and localised form. Two methods of transmission are through contaminated utensils like feeders and waterbowls, and through flies. The afflicted young birds appear sleepy, with drooping wings. They suffer from greenish white diarrhoea. Some may display dyspnea (difficulty in breathing). In adults, the infected birds appear depressed, egg production is reduced and diarrhoea is common.*

Sulpha drugs are used for treatment, sulphadiazine and sulphamerizine being most effective. One gram of sulpha drug dissolved in one litre of drinking water should be provided for five days at a stretch. Nitrofuran compounds are also effective. Proper cleaning and disinfection of bird cages, boxes, equipment and bird houses can help in prevention.

Dr. N.S. Negi

"There is no traditional touch in the treatment now," says Dr. Jain. "We started with Yunani medicine. There was no allopathy at that time. But allopathy is more efficient and quicker; also, surgery is not part of the other systems of medicine."

If a bird does not respond to initial treatment within a period of three days, stool and blood tests are carried out in the hospital's pathological laboratory. Operations to cure eye ailments, for tumours and hernia have been conducted. Local anaesthesia is used during surgery. A duck which was recently mauled by a dog, received several stitches and is better now.

The number of patients and types of cases varies from season to season. A common problem in summer is dehydration. "Water levels in and around Delhi have reduced over the years. The area round the hospital too has been transformed from a residential to a commercial one," says Dr. Jain. Fields which earlier provided food and water for the birds are miles and miles out of the city.

Instead of rushing a dehydrated bird to the hospital, a little first aid is recommended. Wash its face and try to make the creature drink some water. At the hospital, continuous oral fluid therapy is given to dehydrated patients, along with medication.

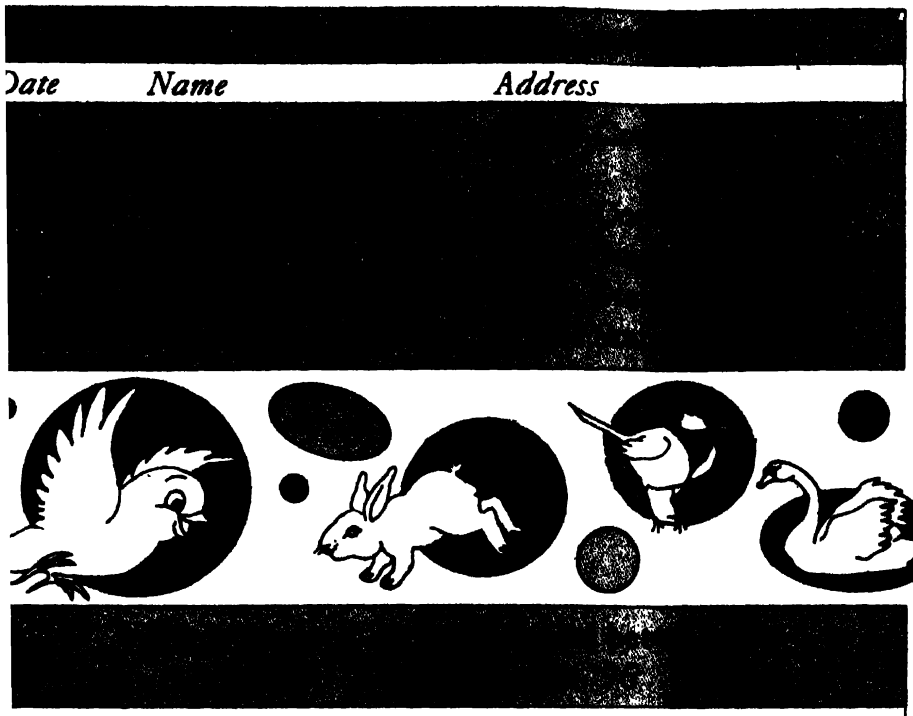
In summer, fans run round the clock and birds flying into buildings get hit by the blades. There is often a deep wound. Turmeric and alum, which are common household items, are to be applied to the injury. A wet cloth may also be used. Placing the injured portion under running water will result in coagulation, stopping the bleeding. First aid is essential.

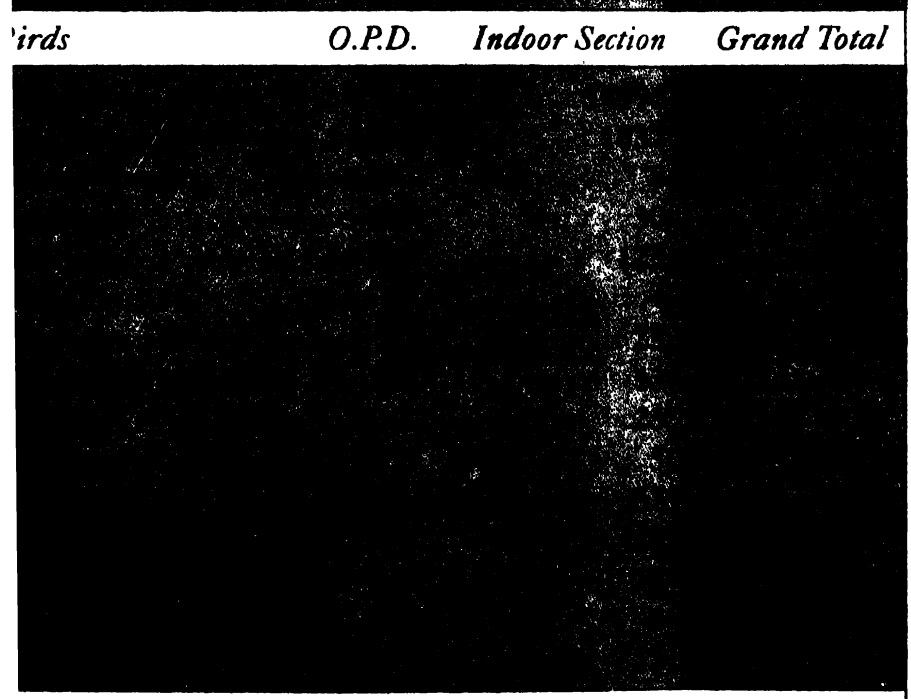
Peacocks are a different story altogether. "Citizens are not allowed to carry the national bird," explains Dr. Jain "Prior police permission is required. If a person encounters an injured peacock, he or she may alert the PCR (Police Control Room). The bird will be brought to us."

People of all age groups and belonging to diverse backgrounds bring in birds for treatment. Even the "Sanjay Gandhi Hospital forwards cases to us," says Dr. Jain. All treatment is free of charge. The O.P.D. remains open from eight to eight while the Indoor Section works round the clock, seven days a week.

A sizeable percentage of donations comes from the Jain community. People visit the hospital, see the work in progress and contribute their







A disease-wise distribution...

bit. Grain and medicines are also received. Fortunately the institution has never faced any financial difficulties and no agency has shown any opposition to their work.

Are people being more inhuman to birds nowadays? Dr. Jain disagrees, "Cruelty has not increased. It was the lack of education that made people cruel earlier. Adivasis in rural areas still make sacrifices to Kali. But even that is less frequent now. When we started the hospital, we used to receive 100–150 birds per month. The number has gone up to thousands now."

Dr. Yadav blames pollution for the increase in diseases among birds.

Love for winged creatures has passed on to the next generation too. Jain's young sons are attached to the hospital and write for the annual journal brought out on the institution. Extension Officer Ram Niwas Sharma's children also take an interest in birds. "They keep water and grain for the birds in my village, close to Delhi," he says contentedly.

Dr. Nagender Yadav takes me round the hospital. In one of the I.C.U. units lies an owl with a head injury, in another is a pigeon with an amputated left wing. "It was struck by a fan blade," reveals Yadav, "but the feathers will grow again." One cage houses some beautiful lovebirds.

Visitors have said...

"If I were a sick pigeon, I hope they'd bring me here."

John Mitchel,
England.

"I have heard so much about your Birds' Hospital, and am very much impressed with your charitable work."

Ann Scarright,
Brook Hospital for Animals, London.

"What a wonderful and highly professional hospital. It is wonderful to know that there is a place to turn to in need. Thank you for your help and kindness."

C. Gathercole,
British High Commission.

"Very nice job, an ideal place for ornithological study. I wish you success."

Mrs. & Mr. P.K. Mohanta
Chief Minister of Assam.

"Highly impressed to see the efforts being made by this institution to protect the heritage of the earth."

Major S. K. Mishra,
Jammu and Kashmir.

"Recovering birds must be singing in praise of your devotion towards them."

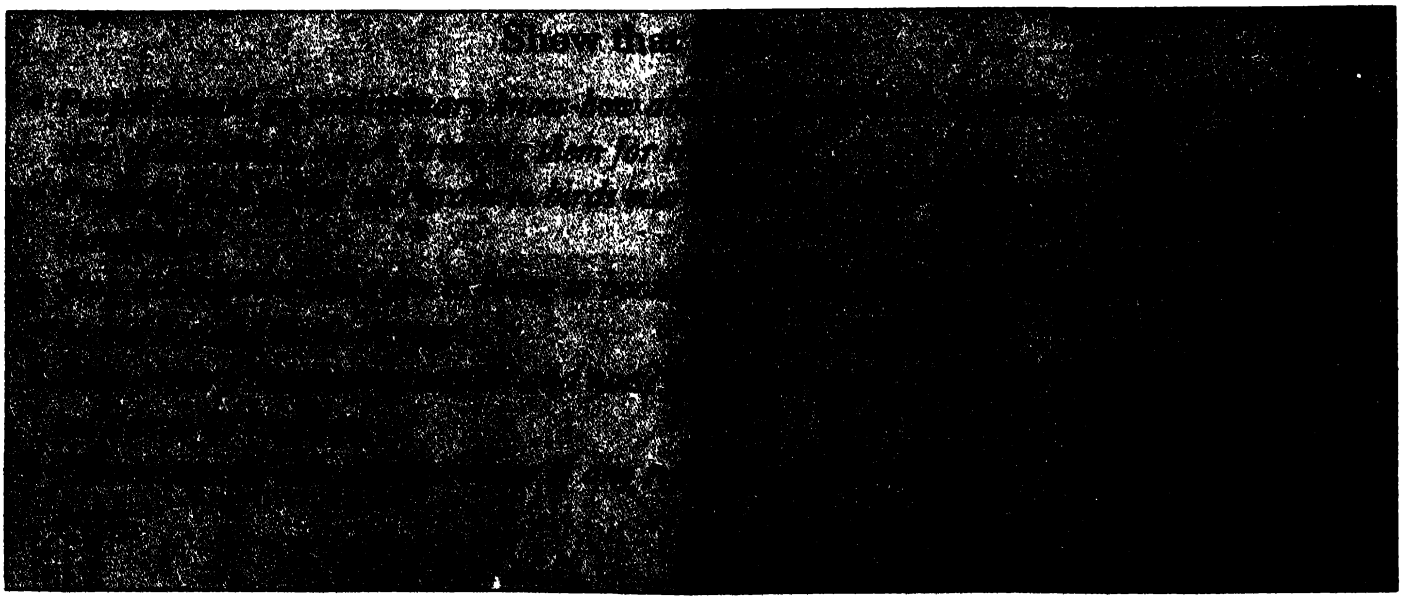
M.N. Trivedi,
Paschim Vihar, Delhi.

"I like birds and pets," says the 25-year-old Dr. Nagender Yadav, who has been working at the hospital for more than a year. He got this job soon after completing his B.V.Sc. & A.H. (Bachelor of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry) from the Govind Ballabh Pant University in Nainital District.

Love for animals seems to run in the family. Nagender's mother is also "very interested in birds" and helps the young physician run his clinic at home. "Birds are not deeply studied in our colleges," feels Yadav. "I learnt a lot here which wasn't taught to me at college." He adds that vets-to-be should work at the Hospital during internship so that they "learn to become attached to birds".

Dr. Vijay Kumar (25) has spent only two months at this hospital. A graduate from the Gujarat Agriculture University, he was earlier working at the Najafgarh Gaushala.

You too can lend a helping hand! Next time you come across an injured or sick bird, you know where to take it.



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HANUMAN IN LANKA

(A PLAY IN THREE ACTS)

Script : Mudita Luthra **Illustrations : Subir Roy**

Here's a chance to feel a part of the Ramlila which you see during Dussehra every year. Hanuman's visit to Lanka, on his search for Seeta has been adapted into a play script. The scenes are very significant to the story, and provide for enough action and fun. Ramayana, the essence of Hindu mythology, has much more to it. This is only a tiny part. You can adapt many more parts to create a large-scale production.

The play is suitable for 8–10-year-old children. It can be performed during two or three school periods. Though the cast is very limited, the production involves a large group of children—maybe one whole section. Directing the play, providing lights and music, arranging for props are as important as acting.

No elaborate sets are required. Simple props and furniture available in the classroom maybe used. Background music and sounds, like the cries of people, can create interesting effects.

Seeta can be dressed in a sari. The Rakshasas, Rakshasis and Ravana can use face masks or have their faces appropriately painted. Hanuman can also wear a mask, tights and a tail. Costumes may be improvised with whatever is available at home and in the school's green room.

In Act 2, the stage is divided into two halves since action is taking place simultaneously. Characters in the part of the stage where no action is taking place should freeze, while those on the other half continue with the play. Similarly, the lights come on wherever the action is taking place while the other half is in darkness.

In Act 3, Scene 1, no real fire should be used. The Rakshasis could tie rags and golden/red/orange cellophane paper to Hanuman's tail, indicating that his tail has been set ablaze. As Hanuman jumps onto each building, flames made of golden/red/orange cellophane or cloth can be held up (by the children behind the props) to show fire. If possible, fans can be placed behind them to create the effect of leaping flames.



Characters:

Seeta
Hanuman
Rakshasis (5–10)
Aksha
Indrajit
Ministers
Ravana
Prahasta
Vibhishana
Rama
Jambumaali
Narrator
Rakshasas (10–15)

ACT I
Scene I

Narrator: We are in the Ashoka *vatika* in Lanka. Seeta is imprisoned here by Ravana. She is thinking of Rama and wondering why he has not come to rescue her. The Rakshasis are troubling her, and Ravana wants her to be his wife.

Hanuman has come in search of Seeta. He has found her and is waiting for an opportunity to talk to her without alarming her.

Hanuman: (*speaking to himself; sitting on the tree*) What should I say to Mother Seeta that she does not doubt me but believes that I come on Lord Rama's behalf?... I know... I will recite in a sweet, soft tone the story of Shri Rama. (*He bends low on the branch and begins speaking softly.*) Rama, Shri Rama—the eldest son of King Dasharatha. Rama, who is loved by all, full of kindness. To preserve his father's honour, he left the kingdom with his wife, Seeta. Ravana carried off Seeta by force. Sugreeva, the monkey king, sent his *Vanara* warriors in search of Seeta.

I too am a *Vanara* warrior. And I now see before me one who Rama described as Mother Seeta.

Seeta: (*looks around*) I wonder who speaks such sweet words in such lovely language (*She sees Hanuman who is very happy. He jumps to the ground and stands before Seeta, palms joined, head bowed.*)

Hanuman: Mother, are you the princess Seeta who was carried off by Ravana?

Seeta: Yes, Ravana has kept me prisoner here in this Ashoka *vatika* since he captured me and brought me to Lanka... (*She falters and looks away.*) Am I being cheated? Is this monkey Ravana in disguise? No, this cannot be Ravana. My heart tells me it cannot be so.

Hanuman: Mother, here is the signet ring Rama has sent for you.

Seeta: Dear son, how foolish

of me to suspect you.

Hanuman: I shall go at once and bring back my Lord. Or, if you wish, sit on my back. I shall carry you across the ocean.

Seeta: No, let my Lord come and rescue me with honour. Tell Rama that I am desolate without him and that I am waiting for him to come with Lakshman to take me out of Lanka. Give this jewel to my Lord as a sign from me. (*Untying a knot at the end of her sari pallav she hands Hanuman a ring.*)

Hanuman: In a few days you will see the two princes standing at the gates of Lanka. Do not lose heart. (*Bows to Seeta and leaves.*)

Scene 2

Narrator: Hanuman is thinking about what to do next. (*He points to Hanuman who is sitting on the wall.*)

Hanuman: (*to himself*) What can I do to make Ravana afraid so that he does not trouble Mother Seeta any more?

(*The lights fade out. When they come on again a bigger Hanuman has started destroying the grove, uprooting trees, pulling out plants and so on. Some Rakshasis come running.*)

Rakshasi 1: What is this?

Rakshasi 2: What is wrong with this monkey?

(*They try chasing the monkey away, but without much success.*)

Rakshasi 3: Let us go and tell the king.

(*Rakshasis go out together*)

ACT 2

(*The stage is divided into two halves, one to represent Ravana's court and the other to serve as an open ground in the streets of Lanka.*)

Scene 1
Ravana's court

(*Ravana dressed in fabulous robes is sitting on the throne, with his ministers in attendance.*)

Narrator: The Rakshasis go to Ravana's court to complain about the monkey.

Rakshasi 1: A huge monkey, terrible to look at, has destroyed the royal garden.

Rakshasi 2: Except the tree under which Seeta is seated.

Ravana: (*turns to bodyguards*) Go at once and capture the monster monkey.

Scene 2

(*Second half of the stage lights up. A huge force, armed with spears and maces sets out. They have an encounter with Hanuman. He leaps and jumps in all directions, whirling a tree trunk. One by one all the Rakshasas fall to the ground.*)

Hanuman: (*cries out*) Long live Rama! Long live Lakshmana! I have come to destroy Lanka.

Scene 3
Ravana's court

Ravana: Send the Rakshasa Jambumaali. (*Actors freeze.*)

(*In the other half of the stage, Jambumaali is defeated by Hanuman. He falls to the ground.*) (*Actors freeze.*)

Minister: (*enters court room*) The monkey has defeated him.

Ravana: Send my son, Aksha. (*Actors freeze.*)

(*In the other half of the stage, Aksha has a fight with Hanuman and Aksha falls to the ground.*) (*Actors freeze.*)

Minister: (*entering court room*) The monkey has killed Aksha. (*Stands with head bowed.*)

Ravana: Let Indrajit go and kill him. (*Actors freeze.*)

Scene 4

(*Second half of the stage lights up. Indrajit sets out with his weapons. He tries hard but he cannot defeat Hanuman*)

Indrajit: I will use the *Brahmastra* on him and he will be bound. (*He murmurs a few words and lets loose an arrow. Hanuman*

drops to the ground. The Rakshasis start dancing around him.)

Rakshasi 1: Let's eat him...

Rakshasi 2: No, let's take him to the king.

Rakshasi 3: He might attack us, let's tie him.

(*They bind Hanuman with ropes and drag him behind them.*)

Indrajit: Take off those ropes. Don't you know that the *mantra* loses its power when physical bonds are used?

Narrator: Hanuman is free of his bonds, but he pretends to be helpless.

(*Hanuman is dragged through the streets to Ravana's court.*)

Scene 5
Ravana's court

(*Hanuman is standing in front of Ravana. The ropes are still around him and he is surrounded by Rakshasis.*)

Prahasta: Do not be afraid, monkey. Who sent you here? Tell the truth and save yourself.

Hanuman: (*very confidently*) I came here to see the Rakshasa king. Sugreeva sent me to search throughout the world for Rama's wife. I came to Lanka and saw the princess. Give Seeta back and ask for forgiveness. Do not make Rama your enemy, or you will be sorry.

Ravana: (*very angry*) Kill him! Take him away!

Vibhishana: Why should we kill him? He is only a messenger. Let us think of a way to punish those who sent him here in the first place.

Ravana: Okay, then set fire to his tail and turn him out.

(*Exit Hanuman, Rakshasis and Ministers.*)

ACT 3
Streets of Lanka

(*A lot of people have gathered in the streets, shouting and laughing. The Rakshasis wrap rags round Hanuman's tail and set it ablaze. Then they lead him through the streets. They walk past the Ashoka vatika, where Seeta is shocked to see him.*)

Seeta: Oh! Agni, do not hurt Hanuman. Be kind to him.

Hanuman: (*to himself*) Fire does not hurt me. The elements are kind to one in Rama's service. Now I will use my power. (*Lights fade out. When they come on again a smaller Hanuman has replaced the bigger one. He frees himself of the ropes.*) I shall set fire to all of Lanka. (*He jumps from building to building and Lanka is in flames. People come running out in panic. They start shouting and crying.*)

Hanuman: (*stops suddenly*) What have I done? Mother Seeta must also have perished in the fire. (*Voices can be heard from the sky so he looks up.*)

Voice 1: What a miracle.

Voice 2: Except for the spot in which Seeta is sitting all of Lanka is in flames.

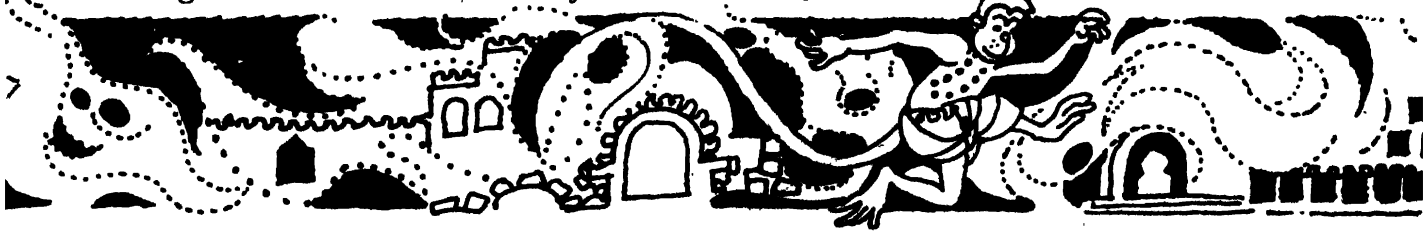
Hanuman: Seeta has saved herself, she has saved me. (*The citizens of Lanka are quiet now. They exit. Hanuman proceeds to the Ashoka vatika.*)

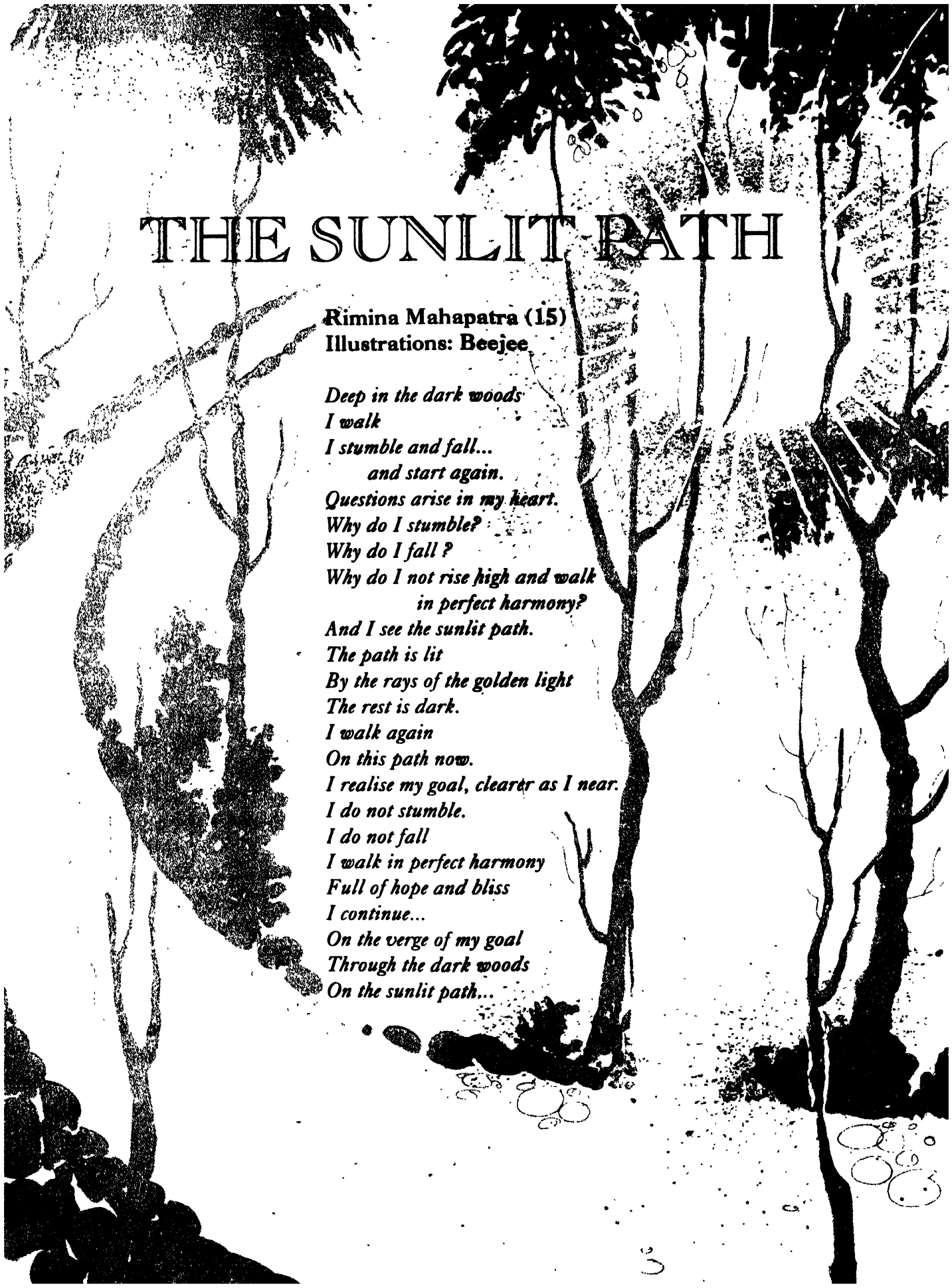
Hanuman: (*to Seeta*) Do not worry, Mother. Sugreeva will soon be here with Rama and Lakshmana. Then they will return to Ayodhya with you. Now give me leave to go.

Seeta: Go speedily, dear son. I know my Lord will succeed in rescuing me.

(*Hanuman bows and exits. Lights fade out.*)

The End

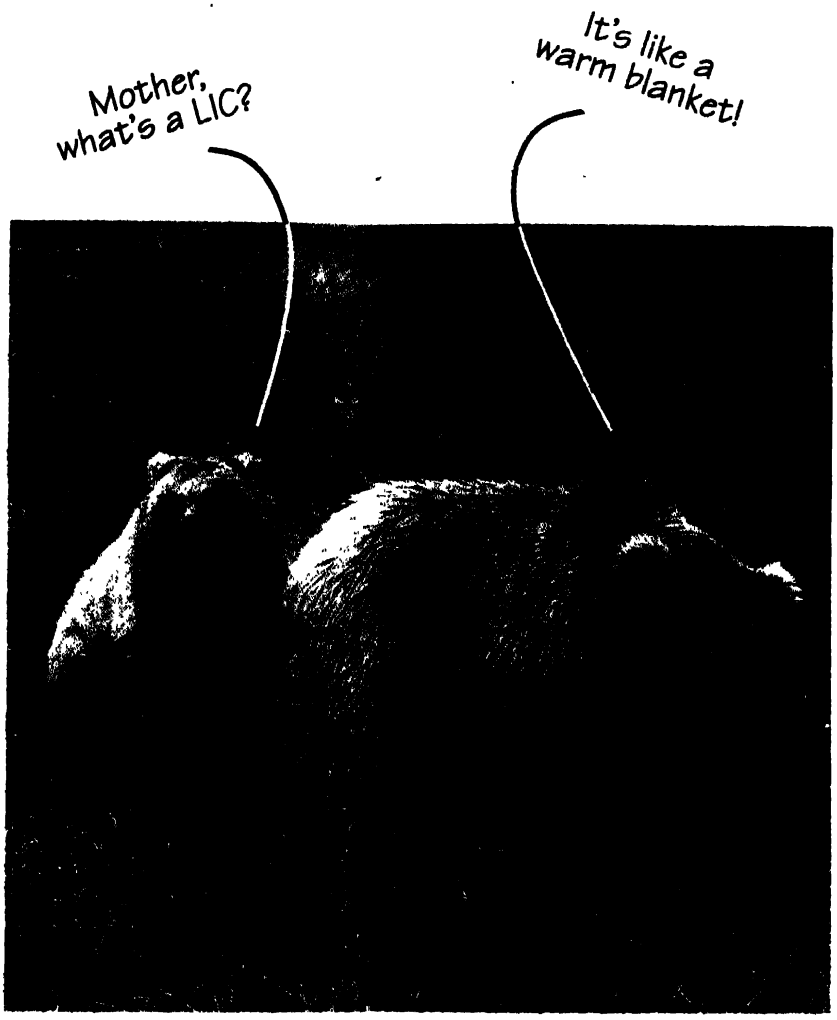




THE SUNLIT PATH

Rimina Mahapatra (15)
Illustrations: Beejee

Deep in the dark woods
I walk
I stumble and fall...
and start again.
Questions arise in my heart.
Why do I stumble?
Why do I fall ?
Why do I not rise high and walk
in perfect harmony?
And I see the sunlit path.
The path is lit
By the rays of the golden light
The rest is dark.
I walk again
On this path now.
I realise my goal, clearer as I near.
I do not stumble.
I do not fall
I walk in perfect harmony
Full of hope and bliss
I continue...
On the verge of my goal
Through the dark woods
On the sunlit path...



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Descriptive Title of Artwork: _____
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VISA OLYMPICS OF THE IMAGINATION 1998

RULES & REGULATIONS : INDIA

1. How To Enter: NO PURCHASE NECESSARY / FREE APPLICATION FORMS / NO APPLICATION FEE. Contest runs from September 1, 1997 to October 14, 1997. You must be between the ages of 9 and 13 (inclusive), as of December 31, 1997 (proof of age will be required for winner's eligibility). The object of the contest is to think of a person you admire, and then draw or paint that person as a competitor in the 1998 Olympic Winter Games. Final artworks must be no larger than 17 inches X 17 inches (36 cms X 36 cms) and created on paper only. All entries/artworks must be accompanied by a written paragraph (50 words or less),describing why you admire the person you have drawn, and why you portrayed him/her in the Olympic Winter Sport you chose. A descriptive title must accompany each artwork. Entries must be accompanied by a completed Entry Form signed by you and your parent or legal guardian and sent to the following address: **Visa Olympics of the Imagination Contest - India, Collection Centre: 55 Whitehall, 143 A.K. Marg, Kemp's Corner, Mumbai 400 036, India.** Entries must be received no later than October 18, 1997.
2. You may submit as many entries as you wish You may use a photocopy of the Entry Form. All artworks must be original, created solely by one individual entrant and never previously published. Sponsor is not responsible for lost, late, incomplete, illegible, damaged or misdirected postage due to mail
3. Entries will be judged by a panel of judges approved by Visa International on the basis of the artwork's originality and imagination, and the artwork's artistic merit The judges will not have access to the written paragraph. The title of the artwork and the written paragraph will not be part of the judging process Judges' decisions are final on all matters relating to this contest
4. One (1) Grand Prize will be awarded in this contest This grand prize consists of a 4-night, 5-day trip for the winner and his or her parent or legal guardian to the 1998 Olympic Winter Games at Nagano in Japan, including hotel (double occupancy), round trip coach airfare from an international airport closest to winner's home, ground transport to scheduled events, meals and selected admission to Olympic events. Payment of all taxes on prize and for any trip expenses not specified, are the winner's responsibility. Winner and one parent or legal guardian must be able to travel at time selected by Sponsor, i.e. between February 4, 1998 to February 12, 1998 or forfeit the prize. No prize substitutions or transfers will be permissible, and also not redeemable for cash. The prize will be delivered to the winner's parent or legal guardian.
5. Contest is open to all Indian citizens residing in India who are between the ages of 9 and 13 (inclusive), as of December 31, 1997, except for children of employees of VISA, participating partner sponsors and their respective parent and subsidiary companies and their agents and suppliers with respect to this contest. The contest is subject to all applicable Indian laws and regulations. Void where prohibited.
6. By participating, entrant transfers all rights in and to the artwork and written paragraph, including all copyrights to Sponsor and agrees to these official rules and to accept decisions of Sponsor as final. Entries become the property of the Sponsor and will not be returned. Winner and parent or legal guardian must sign and return an affidavit of eligibility and liability, and where legal, Publicity Release within 14 days of prize notification or prize will be forfeited and awarded to an alternate winner. Winner and parent or legal guardian must have valid passports and be eligible for entry into Japan on travel dates.
7. In the event of a tie, a duplicate prize will be awarded.
8. The names of the winners will be announced in major publications. For the names of the winners, send a self-addressed stamped envelope along with your entry artwork.
9. Sponsor: Visa International Service Association, P.O. Box 8999, San

Visa Olympics of the Imagination

VISA
WORLDWIDE
PARTNER

Entry Deadline
October 14, 1997

Imagine Your Way to the Olympic Winter Games...

Think of a person you admire, then draw or paint that person as a competitor in the 1998 Olympic Winter Games. You could be one of 25 young artists from around the world to win a trip to the Olympic Winter Games at Nagano - Japan, in February 1998.

You must be 9-13 years old and send in your Entry Form by October 14, 1997.

So let your imagination run wild and enter to win the Visa Olympics of the Imagination art contest!

How To Enter

1. Think of a person you admire - your mother or father, teacher or sports person, movie star or anyone!
2. Draw or paint that person as a competitor in the 1998 Olympic Winter Games .
3. Think of a descriptive title for your artwork.
4. Write one paragraph of 50 words or less, describing why you admire the person you have drawn, and why you portrayed him or her in the Olympic Winter Sport you chose.
5. Fill out the Entry Form provided.
6. Send your artwork (inclusive of descriptive title and written paragraph) and Entry Form to:

**Visa Olympics of the Imagination Contest - India,
Collection Centre:
55 Whitehall, 143 A.K. Marg, Kemp's Corner,
Mumbai 400 036, India.**

In co-ordination with:

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Exciting Prizes to be Won

Grand Prize

A 4-night, 5-day trip for the winner to the Olympic Winter Games at Nagano - Japan in February 1998,

along with the winner's one parent or legal guardian.

1 Second Prize



A multimedia computer with MMX technology

5 Third Prizes



Specially-designed School Bags

10 Consolation Prizes



Specially-designed Mugs

500 Early Bird Prizes



2 Tinkle Digests each

GOING PLACES

PUNE :

CENTRE OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE



Text : Brinda Gill
Transparency : Satyajit Gill

FROM THE banks of the Mulla and Mutha rivers spreads the city of Pune. Set at an altitude of 570 m on the Sahyadri hills in western Maharashtra, Pune has always been regarded as a centre of education, culture and religion. The creation of an industrial area, and a spate of commercial activities have turned quiet roads into bustling office and shopping spaces while adding another dimension to this multi-faceted city.

Pune owes its importance to the rise of the Maratha power when forts were built on nearby mountain summits. Later, under the rule of the Peshwas, Pune became an important political centre, controlling an empire whose dimensions spread across central India. Today the Sinhagad Fort steeped in legends of Shivaji's courageous men is a popular getaway, being only twenty-five km away. Fifty km away are the twin forts of Lohagad and Visapur separated by a one km ridge. There are many other hill forts at convenient motorable distances from Pune, and they are frequented by trekkers and picnickers. Within Pune is Shaniwarwada, the fortified palace of the Peshwa rulers. Built in 1736 it was destroyed by a fire in 1827, but its sturdy outer walls still stand and the ambience within hints at the grand days of the Peshwa rulers.

At Shivajinagar, off the busy Jangli Maharaj Road, quite unexpectedly is the quiet Pataleshwar Cave Temple, an 8th century rock-cut temple. It was hewn out of a single rock and has numerous pillars, a Shiva shrine, a Nandi bull. There are many quiet rock-cut Buddhist caves that can be easily visited from Pune. One of the most popular are the caves at Karla that consist of a beautiful *chaitya* or prayer hall—This is the largest *chaitya* in the country; Karla has several *viharas* or dwelling units too, These caves date back to the first century B.C. and offer an insight into the evolution of Buddhist thought and art. The caves at Bedsa and Bhaja are also very interesting.

Another quiet temple is the one atop the Parvati hill. A flight of 108 steps lead the way to the Nagarkhana or drum house, and the temple of Parvati and Devdeveshwar. The Parvati temple was the private temple of the Peshwa rulers. At the museum are a collection of paintings, manuscripts, weapons and coins.

To see a wonder-house of Indian art, head for the Raja Dinkar Kelkar Museum. In the heart of the city, it is reached through a maze of streets. Of course, once inside, the noise



and crowds of the outside streets are forgotten. There are 36 sections in the museum which display paintings, carved wooden doors, indoor games, musical instruments, textiles, pottery and weapons to name a few collections. This remarkable museum of historical and everyday use artefacts was put together by Shri Dinkar Gangadhar Kelkar (1896–1990).

The Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute has a museum which exhibits an extensive collection of manuscripts. The Bharat Itihas Sanshodak Mandal also has exhibits of paintings, maps, charts, illustrated manuscripts, weapons and documents.

The Deccan College, a post graduate institute for the study of archaeology, has interesting museums of archaeology, coins and Maratha history. Another interesting museum in Pune is the Tribal Art Museum that has a wonderful collection of tribal articles ranging from paintings, combs, masks, musical instruments to images of deities.

Sarasbagh has a Ganesh temple on a small hillock with a lovely garden which make for a popular evening outing for many families; while the Peshwe Udyan houses the Pune zoo. The Kamla Nehru Park and Sambhaji Park are other gardens frequented by families in the evenings. The Katraj Snake Park with its many slippery inhabitants also makes for an interesting visit. On the Prince of Wales Drive are the lovely shady Empress Gardens. On the right bank of the Mulla-Mutha river are the Bund Gardens, another lively spot with the cool breeze from the river. Further along, the river is dotted with migratory birds in the winter; their presence adds much liveliness to the area.

Across the river is the Aga Khan's palace, set in spacious gardens it is the former residence of the Aga Khan, the spiritual head of the Khojas. It was donated to the nation by H.H. Prince Karim Aga Khan in 1969 for its association with Gandhiji and other national leaders, for they were imprisoned here during the Quit India Movement in 1942. Kasturba Gandhi passed away here, and there is a memorial to her as well as Mahadevbhai, Gandhiji's secretary, beyond the gardens. The Aga Khan Palace is now the Gandhi National Memorial and is a living monument to Gandhiji, his associates and the freedom movement. Some rooms have the simple, personal articles of Kasturba, and the white sheeted floor-seating is kept as it was when Gandhiji with Mahadevbhai, Miraben, Sarojini Naidu, Dr. Gilder, Dr. Sushila Nayar must have discussed issues of the freedom struggle and their hopes for the country. The Palace also houses the National Institute for Women, a residential institute conducting training programmes for women.

At Wanawadi is the memorial of Mahadji Shinde, the Great Maratha. There is a temple, an adjoining hall with portraits of all the members of the Scindia family and a memorial to the warrior. A sign near the main hall requests visitors not to open an umbrella in the complex as it would be disrespectful to the memory of the great warrior. Near Main Street is a striking red brick building in English-Gothic style. It is the Ohel David Synagogue, often referred to as the Lal Deval. It was built in 1867 by David Sassoon who had a vast trading business.

Ganesh Chaturthi (which usually comes off in August or September) is Pune's most popular festival. The festivities stretch over 11 days beginning with the installation of an image of Ganesh on the first day. On the days that follow there are prayers and many social and cultural activities. On the last day the images of Ganesh are taken out in a procession that winds its way through the city towards the river, where the images are immersed.

Information : Pune is about 200 km away from Mumbai and is well connected by air, rail and road.

PANDA CLUB OF INDIA

Newsletter Vol. I No. 9

Dear friends,

I eagerly wait to correspond with you through this page. Of course, we do chat with each other on our Panda Club shows every week! I'm glad you enjoy the newsletter and enthusiastically send entries to contests. I get very excited when I receive your letters from the remotest parts of the country, and hope some day to reach there personally.

While India celebrates 50 glorious years of independence, there is so much to read, so much to hear and to see in the media—press, radio and television. That everyone is proud to be an Indian is evident from the large number of entries we received for the slogan writing contest of which we share with you the best. It is you, the young generation, who will carry the torch of your country forward, without allowing the identity of the nation to be lost.

While we talk of India and its cultural heritage, we must also be proud of its natural wealth—the mountains, rivers, forests with its beautiful flora and abundant fauna. The more we treasure and preserve all these, the richer will the country be! Let us contribute our mite to a rich environment. Begin by planting a tree TODAY!

Love always,

Panda.

Your own Panda Club merchandising includes Panda Club T-shirts, Dennis T-shirts, Dennis colorbook, Dennis Colorstix & Dennis notebooks. Now available in the market! Enjoy them and have a great time!

I am proud to be an Indian...

...because India is a country with all natural resources and manpower. India has given birth to famous persons as leaders, reformists, scientists, poets, doctors and others.

Aishwarya Ramdas, Jamshedpur

...for its natural creation, and for its culture. I love birds like parrots, not eagles and vultures. And for that greenery, which is very necessary.

Shruti S. Choudhary, Mumbai

...because of its rich and varied heritage. I am proud of the freedom fighters who fought for my country. Because of them we are now celebrating fifty years of Independence. VANDE MATARAM.

Felroy Agnelo Rodrigues, Goa

...because India is unique and colourful with varied customs, different religions, many languages, contrasting clothes—yet one country. Home of the Mahatma and mine too!

Ajay Jonathan Jayaraj, Madurai

...because India is a prosperous, independent nation. It is full of hope, culture and boundless history.

Anurag Sankhyan, Shimla

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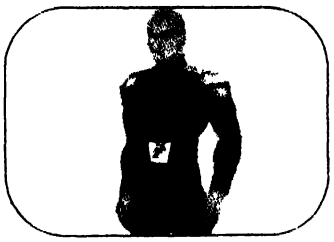
PHANTOM, MY HERO!

Here is the person hundreds of you all over the world consider a hero. Colour his picture and write, in not more than 10 words, "Phantom is my hero because..."

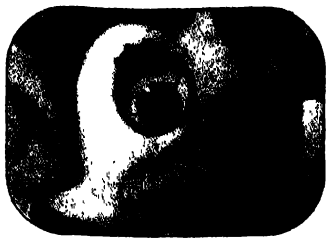
The four best entries will receive exciting prizes.



Bakari's Wise Quote:
"Next time you get a sore throat, be thankful you are not a giraffe!"



Monday 5.30 P.M. on DD II—FLASH GORDON : On a vital mission to save planet Earth from 'Ming the Merciless', Flash Gordon makes a rocket journey to the planet Mongo. Join the adventures of Flash Gordon.



Tuesday 5.30 P.M. on DD II—RIMBA'S ISLAND : Six lively, lovable, colourful costumed animal characters who dwell deep in the idyllic rain forest, share their joys and learn from one another catchy songs and simple stories--(dubbed in Hindi)



Thursday 5.00 P.M. on DD II—SUPERHUMAN SAMURAI SYBER SQUAD : Sam Collins, a video game champion and leader of a teenage garage band, fights an alien warlord 'Kilokahn' who has infected the digital world with monster "megaviruses."

Panda Club is trade mark of ABC Cable and International Broadcast Inc in India

PANDA CLUB MEMBERSHIP RULES

To be a PANDA CLUB member you must be between 6 and 16 years of age.
The member must sign his/her card to activate member privileges.
Card is good for one year from date of issue.
The Card entitles ONLY the card-holding members to the following benefits.

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Invitations to special PANDA CLUB Events and Activities!

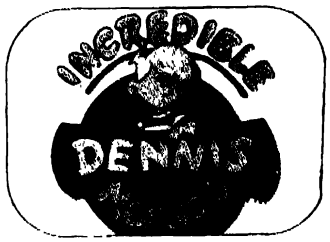
IF FOUND PLEASE MAIL TO:

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FIRST SERVE ENTERTAINMENT INDIA PVT. LTD
C-2/62, II Floor
Safdarjung Development Area
New Delhi-110016

3, Tarapore Avenue
Harrington Road
Chennai-600031, India



Thursday 5.30 P.M. on DD II—PHANTOM :
The legendary Lord of the jungle—Phantom, is incredible. Phantom uses the secrets taught by the natives of the deep woods to fight and conquer crime.



Saturday 6.00 P.M. on DD II—DENNIS THE MENACE : Irrepressible Dennis and his unwilling best friend, the grumpy Mr. Wilson will enthral you with their hilarious antics and send you into splits.



From April 5 5.30P.M. on DD II—DEFENDERS OF THE EARTH : Led by the Phantom, Flash Gordon and Mandrake the Magician challenge 'Ming' in a series of great adventures. They use powerful computers and space age technology to combat and overpower him.

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PANDA CLUB

1 Colour Phantom and complete the slogan.

2 Cut out the blank Panda Club Membership Card (A and B). Paste your stamp size (2.5x2.5 cm) colour photograph on B.

3 Complete the CW Subscription Form and send it with the Money Order/Demand Draft/Cheque payable to *Children's World.*

4 Put all the above in an envelope addressed to:
'Panda Club of India',
First Serve Entertainment,
C-2/62, II Floor,
Safdarjang Development Area,
New Delhi-110016.

CUT AND KEEP

FIRST SERVE ENTERTAINMENT (FSE) INDIA PVT. LTD.
YOUR CALENDAR OF PANDA CLUB SHOWS

CHANNEL	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT

READER'S CHOICE

By Reader of the Month : Dipavali Debroy



IMAGINE yourself sitting at home doing some household mending, when suddenly you are invited on a trip to Europe! Wonderful vistas spread out before you... Naples, Florence, Venice, Italy, Switzerland, England, France...

How would you react to that news?

Imagine yourself in Rome at Carnival time, watching the crowd from a balcony overhanging the Corso, being showered with confetti. Then suddenly, the next morning, you are faced with the problem of taking care of a very sick little girl and her worried mother in a land where the language is alien, the environment unfamiliar, and the usual amenities absent. How would you cope with that situation?

Imagine yourself worn out through long days of nursing and watching by the bedside, fighting for the very roof over your head, and racking your brains to find substitutes for simple things like a cube of ice, a feeding-cup or a hot-water-bag. Then, when you are absolutely on the verge of collapse, there comes the wonderful and welcome news that the patient is out of danger. How would you react?

Imagine yourself recovered from all that strain, relaxed and enjoying yourself after a long time, floating in a gondola along the Grand Canal of Venice. All at once you are told that the trip is being cut short and the long-awaited visits to Switzerland and Germany cancelled. How would you cope with that disappointment?

Katy of *What Katy Did* (first published in 1872) and *What Katy Did At School* (1873) faced all such problems and prospects when she was twenty-one. *What Katy Did Next* (1886) is the story of how she coped with them.

The trilogy is by Sarah Chauncey Woolsey born in Cleveland, Ohio, (around 1845), who wrote under the pen-name of Susan Coolidge. Other books by her are: *The New Year's Bargain* (1871), *Mischief's Thanksgiving* (1874), *Nine Little Goslings* (1875), *For Summer Afternoons* (1876), *Eyebright* (1879), *A Guernsey Lily* (1881), and *A Round Dozen* (1883).

In the first book of the series, Katy Carr is a twelve-year-old girl, the eldest of six motherless children in the small town of Burnet. She tears her dress every day, hates sewing, and doesn't care a button about being called "good". She is hot-headed, impatient and not always obedient. A fall from the swing made an invalid of her for a stretch of time. She tends to slip into slovenliness and self-pity. But her invalid cousin Helen teaches her how to meet the sudden challenges of life, and turn its shocks and hurts to good use.

By the next book, Katy, all-recovered, is the mature and efficient housekeeper of the Carr household. She is, in fact, in danger of becoming old before her years, and that makes her father send her (with sister Clover) to boarding-school at Hillsover. There Katy is exposed to separation from her family and her hometown, to the mischievous pranks of girls of her age, and even to some injustice at the hands of authorities. Her familiarity with sickness and pain make her generous even to the ones

who are unfair to her. She comes out of the boarding-school, a balanced and mature young woman.

In *What Katy Did Next*, the last book of the series, Katy goes abroad with Mrs Ashe, a neighbour, and her little daughter, Amy, and has a whole lot of new experiences in settings very different from either Burnet or Hillsover.

Chapter Two of *What Katy Did Next* opens with:

"It is a curious fact, and makes life very interesting, that, generally speaking, none of us have any expectation that things are going to happen till the very moment when they do happen. We wake up some morning with no idea that a great happiness is at hand, and before night it has come, and all the world is changed for us; or we wake bright and cheerful, with never a guess that clouds of sorrow are lowering in our sky, to put all the sunshine out for a while, and before [illegible] is dark."

Reacting to unexpected joys and sorrows, making full use of opportunities to grappling [illegible] up a very important part of life, and it is usually in our teens or early twenties that we first encounter such experiences. In that sense, *What Katy Did*, though written more than a century ago, deals directly with the problems of youth. The Katy of today may not wear long skirts with ruffles or wear bonnets, but she is equally thrilled with the prospect of travel in foreign parts and the chance of "following the track of Ulysses".

"To go to Europe for a year with Mrs Ashe and Amy seemed simply too delightful to be true. All the things she had heard about and read about—cathedrals, pictures, Alpine peaks, famous places, famous people—came rushing into her mind in a sort of bewildering tide as dazzling as it was overwhelming."

Katy enjoys herself thoroughly on the journey, though not with shopping in Paris or waltzing with young men, like her empty-headed cousin Lilly. She absorbs the [illegible] benefit of travelling "Continent", "the glory and the [illegible] and history and [illegible] [illegible] strengthened; [illegible]

When Amy [illegible] Rome and the landl[illegible] to throw them o[illegible] the h[illegible] Katy stands up to her. [illegible] French—an alien tongue—she speaks so force[illegible] only is the lan[illegible] er[illegible] uncle, N[illegible], is also tremendously im[illegible]sed. This lays the foundation for a romance which is lasting and mature.

"She's a trump of a girl," he thought, ...upon my word she was glorious! I didn't suppose she could look so handsome!" For Katy—the girl from the little town of Burnet—has indeed acquired a different kind of beauty in the course of her travels—a new smartness, awareness and boldness of spirit.

When Mrs Ashe cuts short her tour of Europe, Katy is most disappointed.

"Shall you mind very much?" Mrs Ashe asked.

Katy has to swallow hard before she can answer, and though she prettily thanks Mrs Ashe for "the loveliest six month's treat th[illegible]e has a sob in [illegible]s where her [illegible]rts in *What Katy* [illegible]ntinues through *At School*—comes [illegible]ity. It is not easy [illegible]l in strange sur[illegible], or patiently nurse a [illegible]d. But it is far more dif[illegible] stomach disappoint[illegible]ts and make the best of t[illegible], which is what Katy does i[illegible] end. And no sooner does s[illegible]o that, a new happiness co[illegible]s into her life—making up for[illegible] she was going to miss. She get all ready for the [illegible]ge in her life—a life [illegible] Worthington.

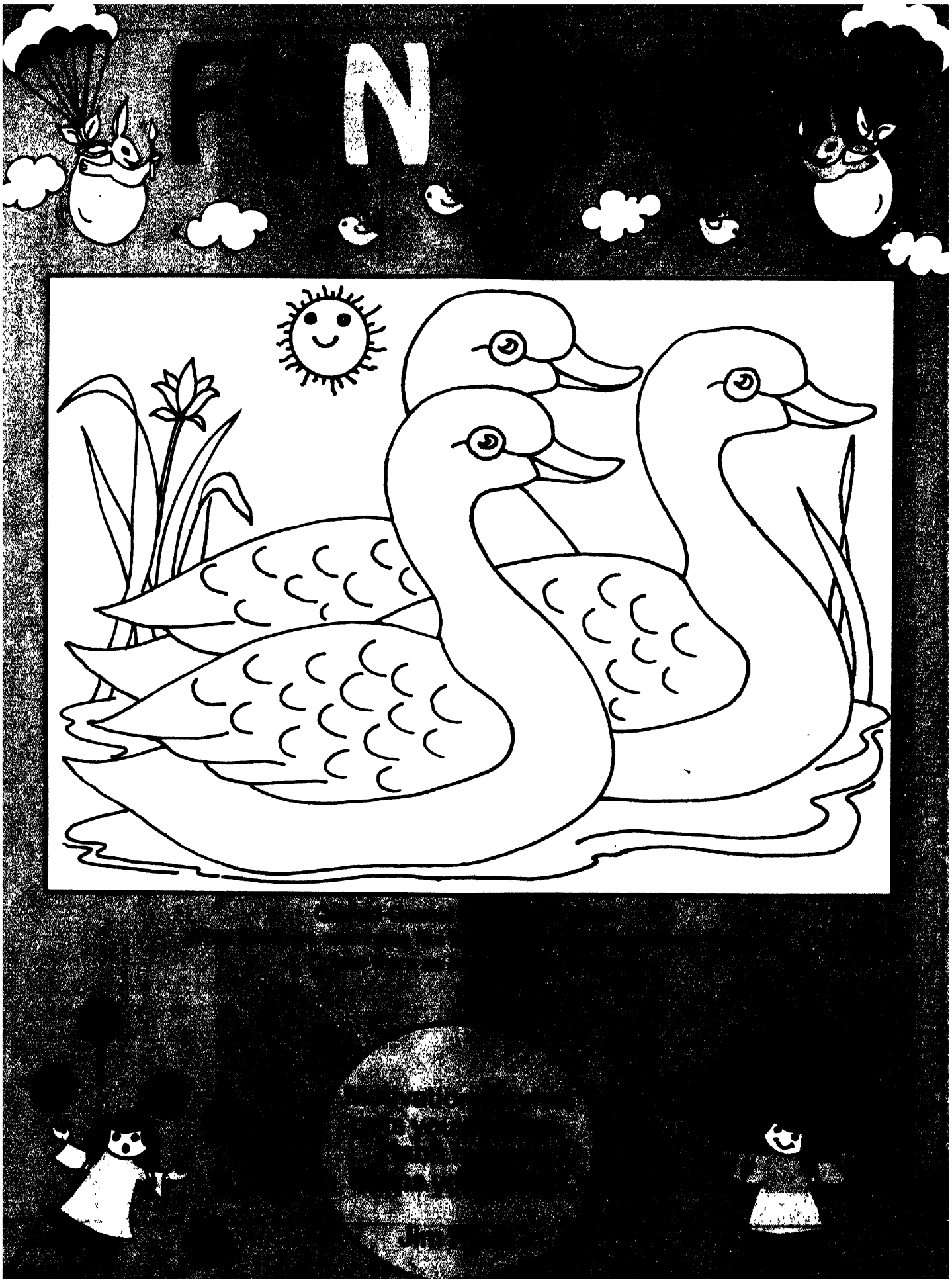
"I am so glad I read all about [illegible] when I was in my teens. She has been a good friend all these years. She is about 132 years old now; she could be a good friend of yours too, today, and for all time to come.

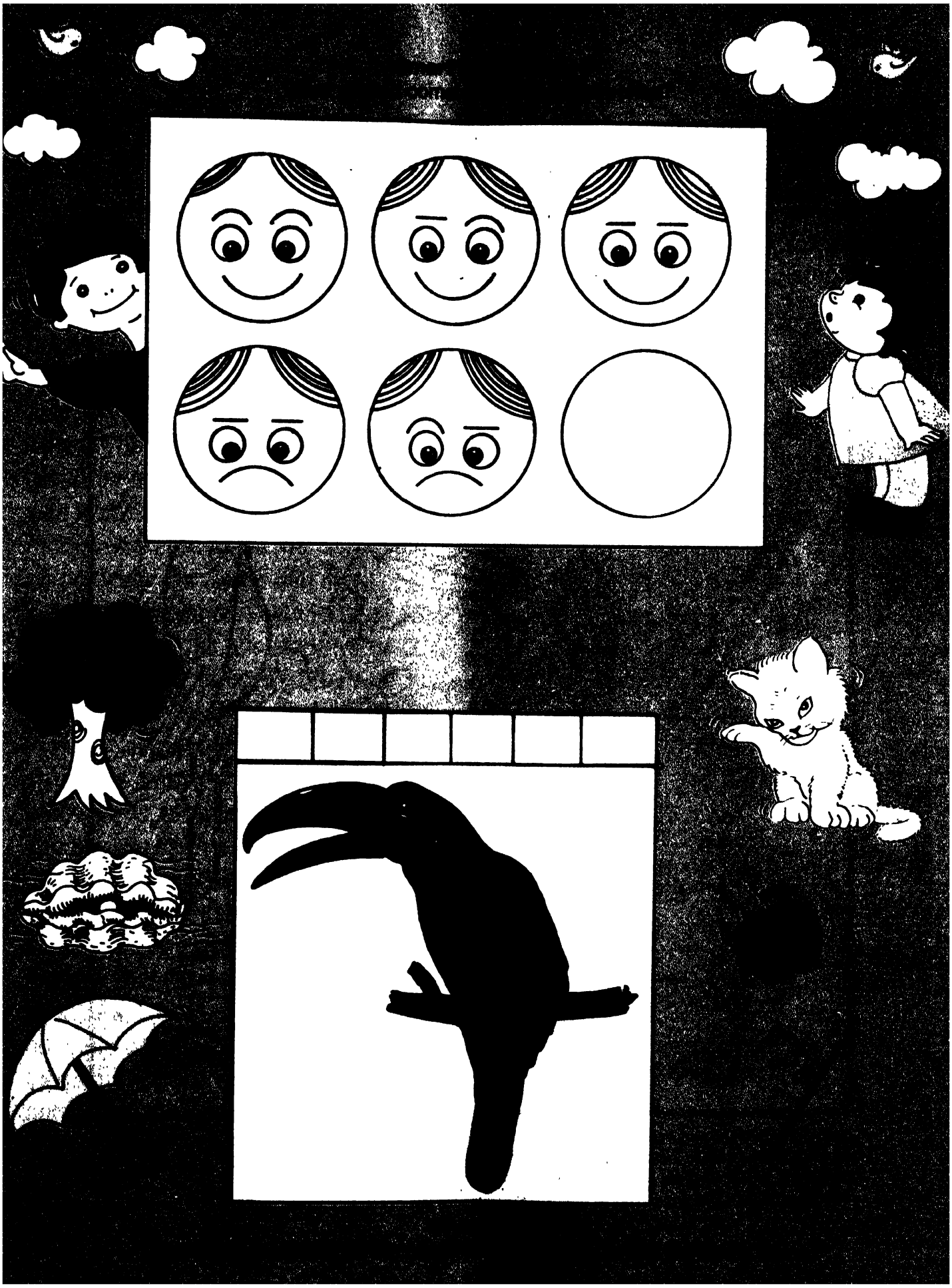


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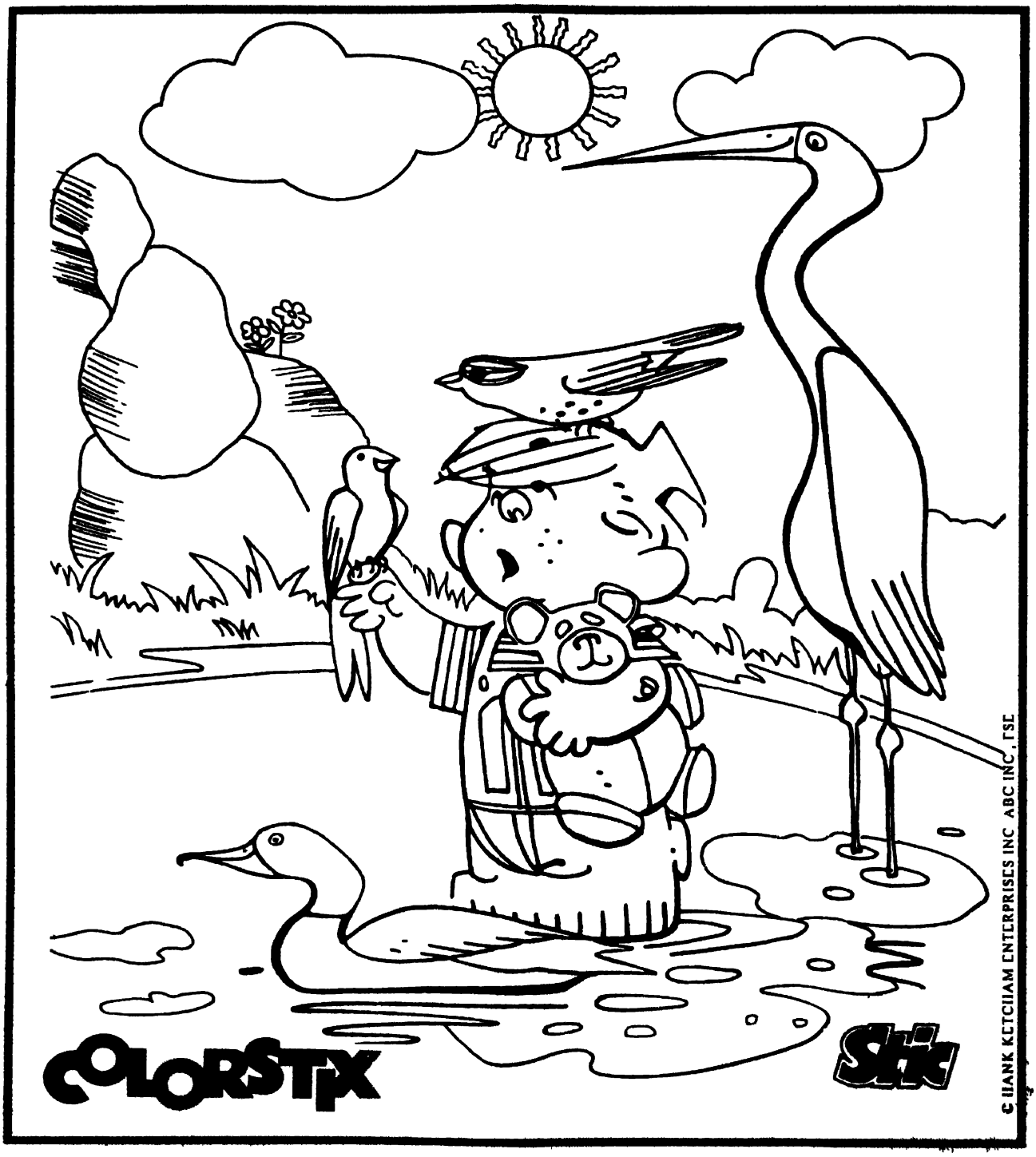
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The first three winning entries will receive Cash and gift Hampers from *STIC*

Mother Teresa

(1910–1997)



She searched the streets of Calcutta for the homeless, the sick and the uncared for...a frail, tiny woman whose heart held a vast and endless outpouring of compassion and love. Those whom society spurned with revulsion and contempt, she embraced with warmth and tenderness. Millions have walked the roads that she walked and crossed the slums that she crossed; millions continue to do so—but none stopped...as she stopped...to lend a helping hand, to comfort the suffering, to give solace to the dying. "I see God in every human being," is what she said. This sums up the difference between us, mere mortals, and her—'the apostle of love', 'the saint of the gutters'—Mother Teresa.

Are we not blessed that we live in the same century as she did? Are we not blessed that we live in the same country as she chose to live in? Are we not blessed if we allow a few drops of the mighty ocean of her love to touch our lives. Let us see "God in every human being". What greater tribute can we pay her!

S. S.

She walks upon

Numerous awards have been conferred on Mother Teresa. Among them are:

- the Magsaysay Award (1962)
- the Padma Shri (1963)
- the First Pope John XXIII Peace Prize
- the Nobel Peace Prize (1979)
- the Bharat Ratna (1980)
- the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding
- the Leo Tolstoy International Award



"The biggest problem...is not disease but lack of love and charity, the feeling of being unwanted."

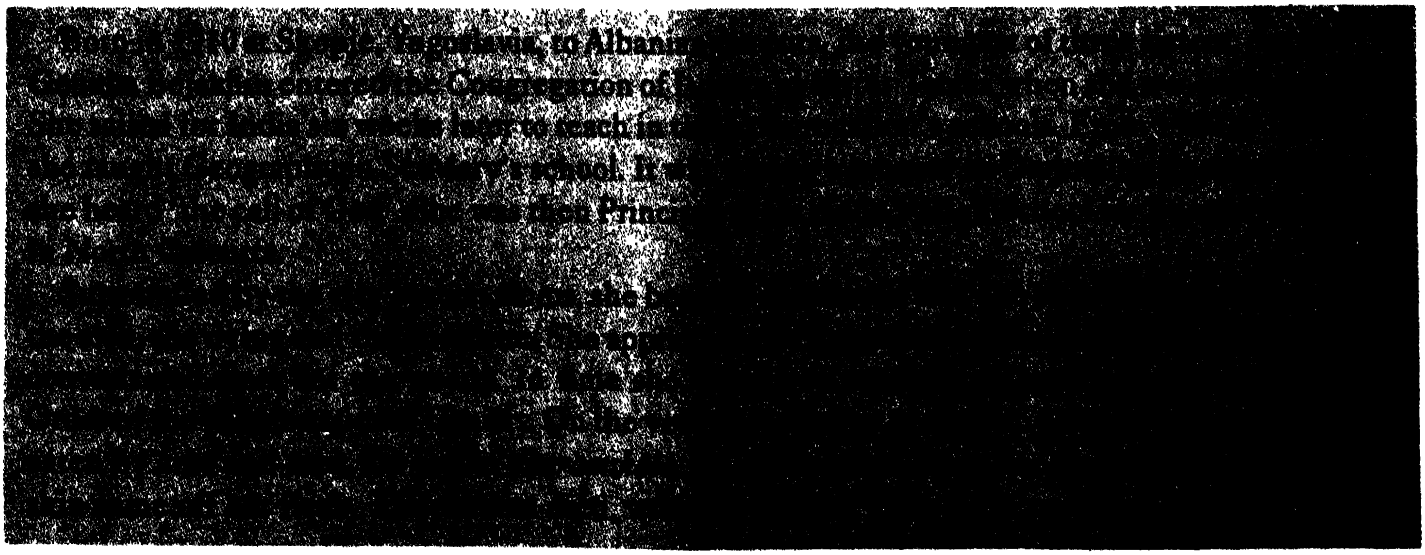
"Nobody in Nirmal Hriday has died depressed, in despair, unwanted, unfed or unloved. That is why I think this is the treasure house of Calcutta. We give them whatever they ask according to their faith. Some ask for Ganges water, some for Holy Water, for a word or for a prayer. We try and give them whatever they want. Some just ask for an apple, or bread, or a cigarette. Others just want somebody to sit with them..."

"Death is going home, yet people are afraid of what will come...Very often as we live, so we die. Death is nothing but a continuation of life, the completion of life. The surrendering of the human body. But the heart and soul live forever...If it was properly explained that death was nothing but going home to God, then there would be no fear."

"You take care of their tomorrows, I take care of their todays."

On being accused of an 'obsession' with poverty

"I see God in every human being. When I wash a leper's wounds, I feel I am nursing the Lord Himself: is it not a beautiful experience?"



the earth no more...

"People today are hungry for love, for understanding love, which is much greater and which is the only answer to loneliness and great poverty. That is why we are able to go to countries like England and America and Australia where there is no hunger for bread. But these people are suffering from terrible loneliness, terrible despair, terrible hatred, feeling unwanted, feeling helpless, feeling hopeless. They have forgotten how to smile, forgotten the beauty of the human touch. They are forgetting what is human love..."

"St. Peter said go back to earth, there are no slums here."

In a dream Mother Teresa saw last year.

"The healthy person may be closer to dying or even more dead than the person who is dying. They might be spiritually dead, only it doesn't show.
Who are we to decide?"

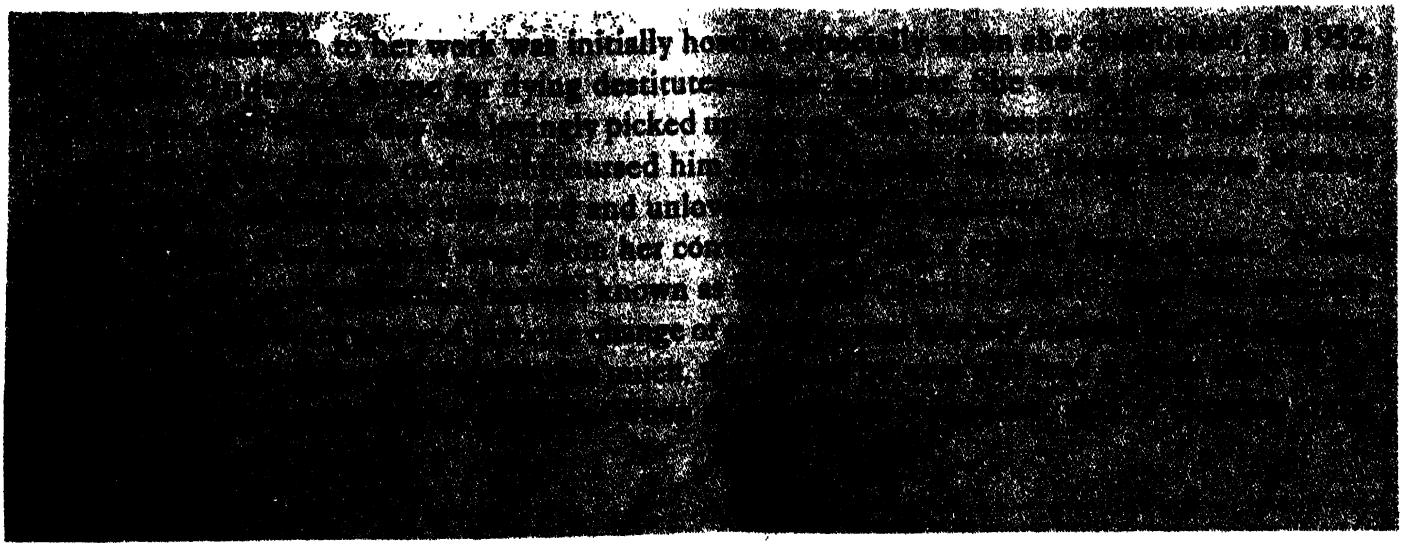
"You should spend at least half an hour in the morning, and an hour at night in prayer. You can pray while you work. Work doesn't stop prayer and prayer doesn't stop work. It requires only that small raising of mind to Him. "I love you God, I trust you, I believe in you, I need you now." Small things like that. They are wonderful prayers."

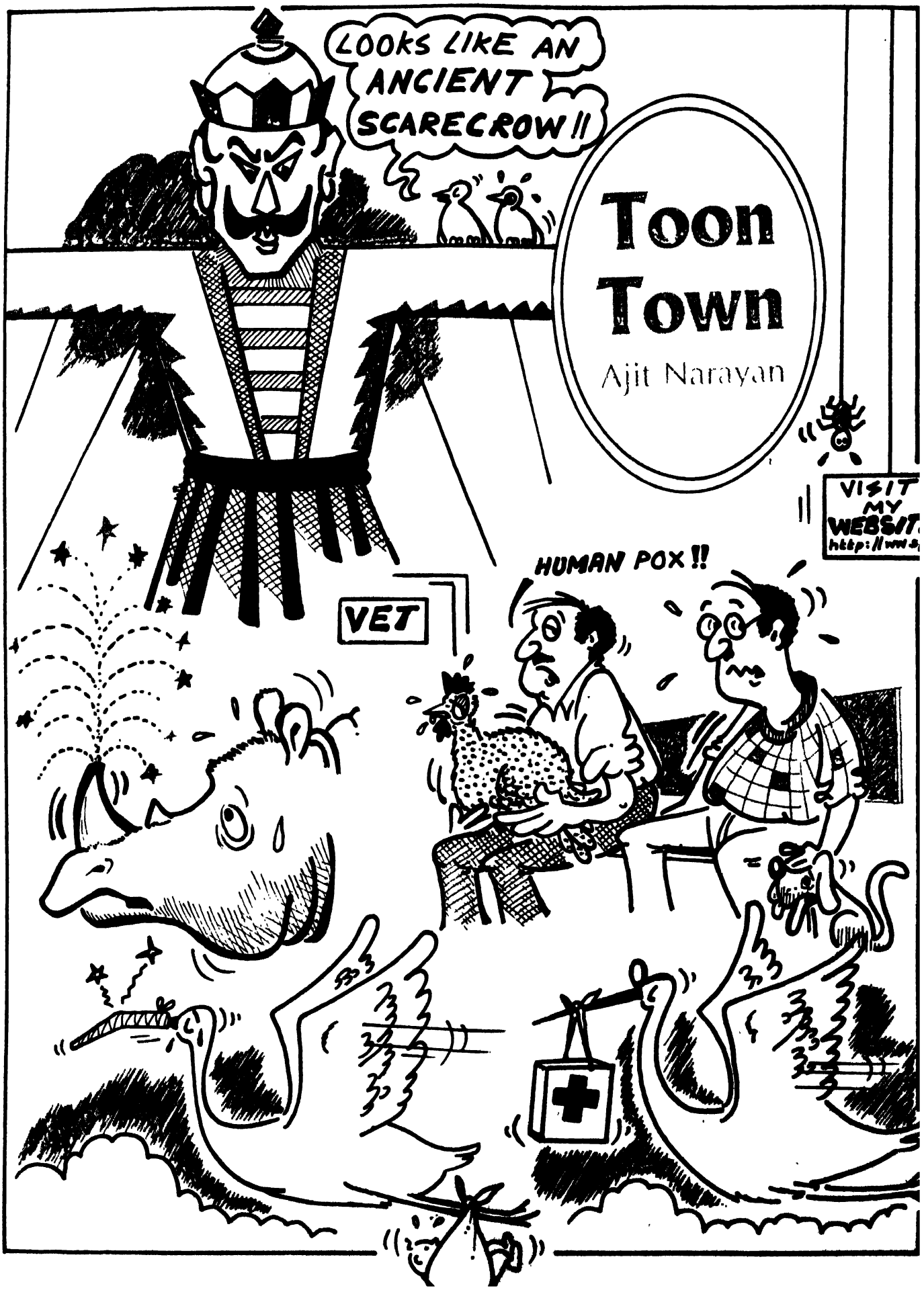
Six centres run by Mother Teresa in Calcutta:

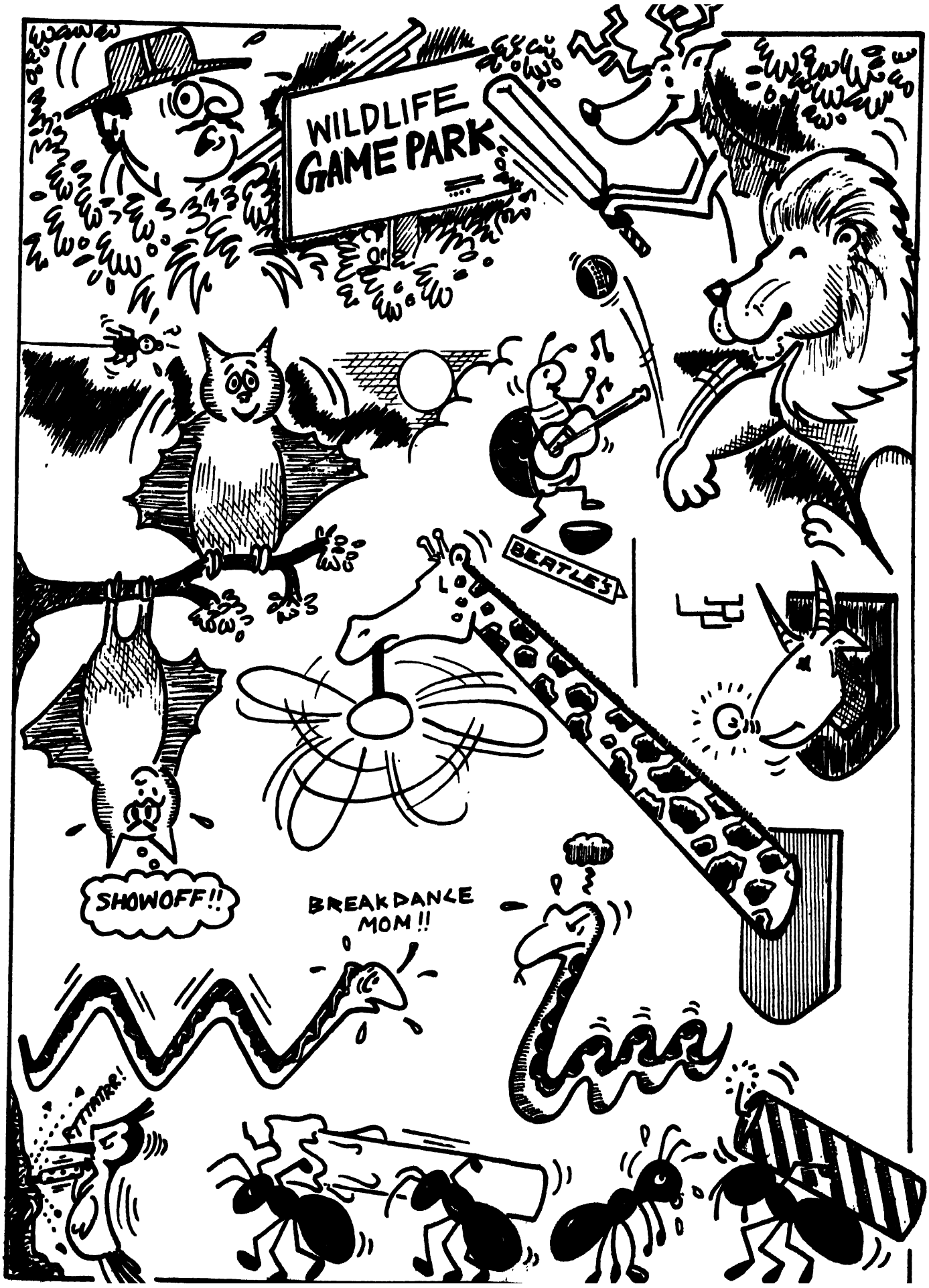
- Nirmal Hriday for the aged
- Shishu Bhavan
- Shanti Daan, a home for lepers
- Prem Daan—for mentally handicapped adults
- Another Shishu Bhavan for undernourished children
- Jeeven Jyoti—for mentally and physically handicapped children



"I can't breathe anymore."
—Mother's last words.




LOOKS LIKE AN ANCIENT SCARECROW !!
Toon Town
Ajit Narayan
VISIT MY WEBSIT
VET
HUMAN POX !!


WILDLIFE
GAME PARK
BEATLES
SHOWOFF!!
BREAKDANCE
MOM!!

SMALLEST
LARGEST
TALLEST

THE NEWS ABOUT NEWSPAPERS

Illustrations : Subir Roy

In this day of electronic news, which combines audio-visual presentation, the good old newspaper still holds its own, and most of us can't begin our day without at least glancing at the pages of one. We each have our own favourite paper which we have got used to over the years. We would give anything to read it even if it is not published from where we live. Never mind if it is three days old, it is like getting the news straight from a dear friend.

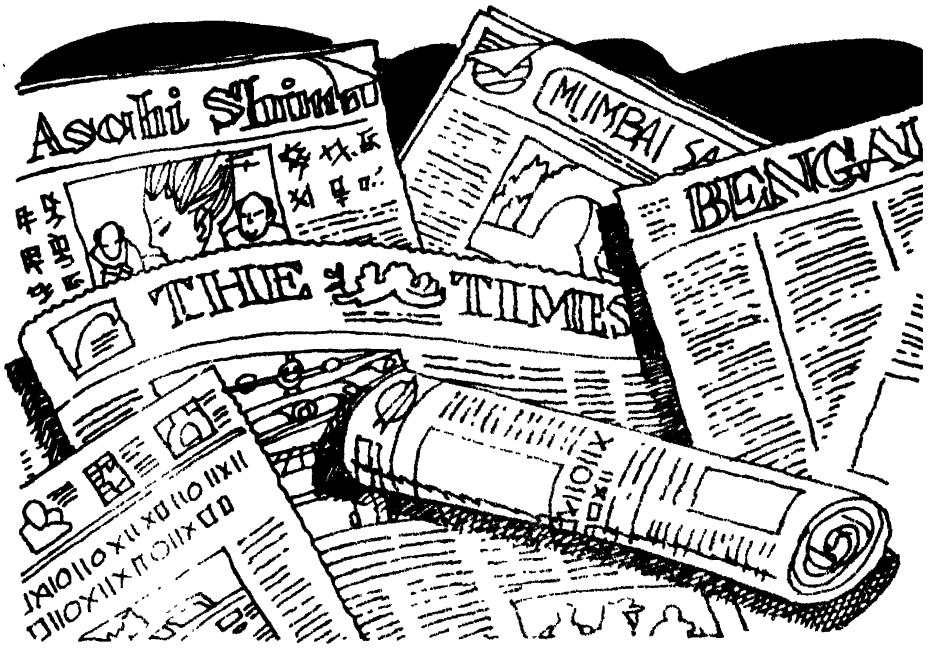
So what is a newspaper? Even the youngest reader of this column would know that NEWS stands for the first letters of North, East, West and South. If you know what it stands for, you would also know that a newspaper has got its name because it collects information from all these directions. Newspapers apart from the dailies, come in various forms—weekly, fortnightly and monthly. Only these are called news magazines. When they cater to a special subject or target audience, they are simply called periodicals or magazines.

Newspapers were not always so well demarcated into different sections like local and international news, sports and politics, not to speak of editorials and articles of special interest and sections on entertainment. Every newspape worth its name also has specia sections like children's corner arts and culture, comics, wom en's sections and so on. In short they have something fo everyone and it would be un imaginable to conceive ou daily lives without them in some form or the other.

When and how did newspapers originate? Let's take a quick look at the story o News.

- The very **first newspaper** probably appeared in Rom in 59 B.C. It wasn't exactly a newspaper but a news shee called Acta Diurna (Dail





Events) that was posted in public places.

- The world's **first printed newspaper** was a Chinese circular called Dibao (Ti-Pao), which was printed from carved wooden blocks during the A.D. 700's.
- The **first newspapers** as we know them today had their origin in the newsletters or newsbooks that were published in the **industrial centres of Europe** in the 1400's. These were called **Courants, Occurrents or Intelligencers.** These contained news that would be of interest to bankers and business people, mostly business news and announcements of events.
- The **first regularly published news sheet** was probably **Avisa Relation oder Zeitung**, which was published weekly from Strasbourg, then in Germany in 1609.
- It was again in Germany that the world's **first real newspaper** was published. Egenolph Emmel founded the **Frankfurter Journal**, a weekly paper, in 1615.
- The **first daily journal** in the world was also a German paper called **Leipziger Zeitung** which was published in **1660**. Though at first a weekly, it soon became a daily.
- Do you know which is the **oldest newspaper still in existence?** It is **Weiner Zeitung**, which was first published in **1703**. It has been continuously published except during World War II. However, the paper which holds the record for being **published without a break** since its inception in 1797, is **The Gazette** which is published from Alexandria in Virginia, US.
- The record for **newspaper readership** belongs to Sweden with about **572 copies** sold daily for **1000 people** as per a 1993 survey.
- **Asahi Shimbun**, a Japanese daily, perhaps holds the record for being the newspaper with the **largest circulation** in the world. It had a daily circulation of over 11 million in 1993.
- The **first newspaper in India** was the **Bengal Gazette** or the Calcutta General Advertiser, which was published by Hickey in 1780.
- The **oldest Indian** (also the oldest Asian) **daily still being published** is the **Mumbai Samachar**, which was launched in 1822. Among the English papers **The Times of India**, is the oldest. It was first published in 1838 as a weekly paper and was known as the Mumbai Times and Journal of Commerce. It became The Times of India in 1850, when it also became a daily.
- The newspaper with the **largest circulation** in India is **The Times of India**, published from six centres. Its **total circulation was 9,45,619** as in 1995.
- **Malayala Manorama**, a weekly in Malayalam, holds the record for the **largest circulation among magazines.** Its circulation was **12,53,544**, as in 1995.

Compiled by Thangamani

BUILDERS OF MODERN INDIA

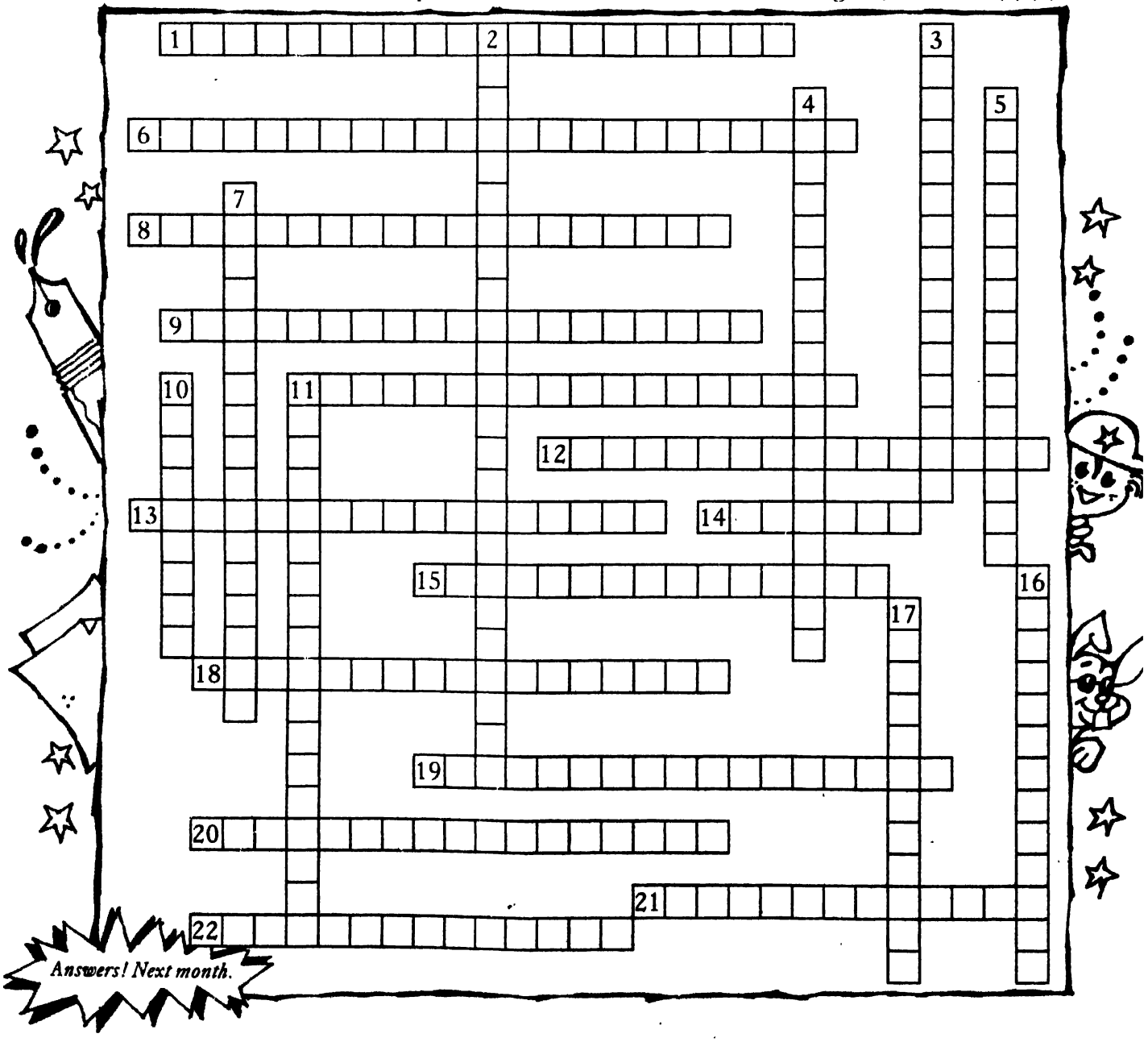
By Sunanda Verma

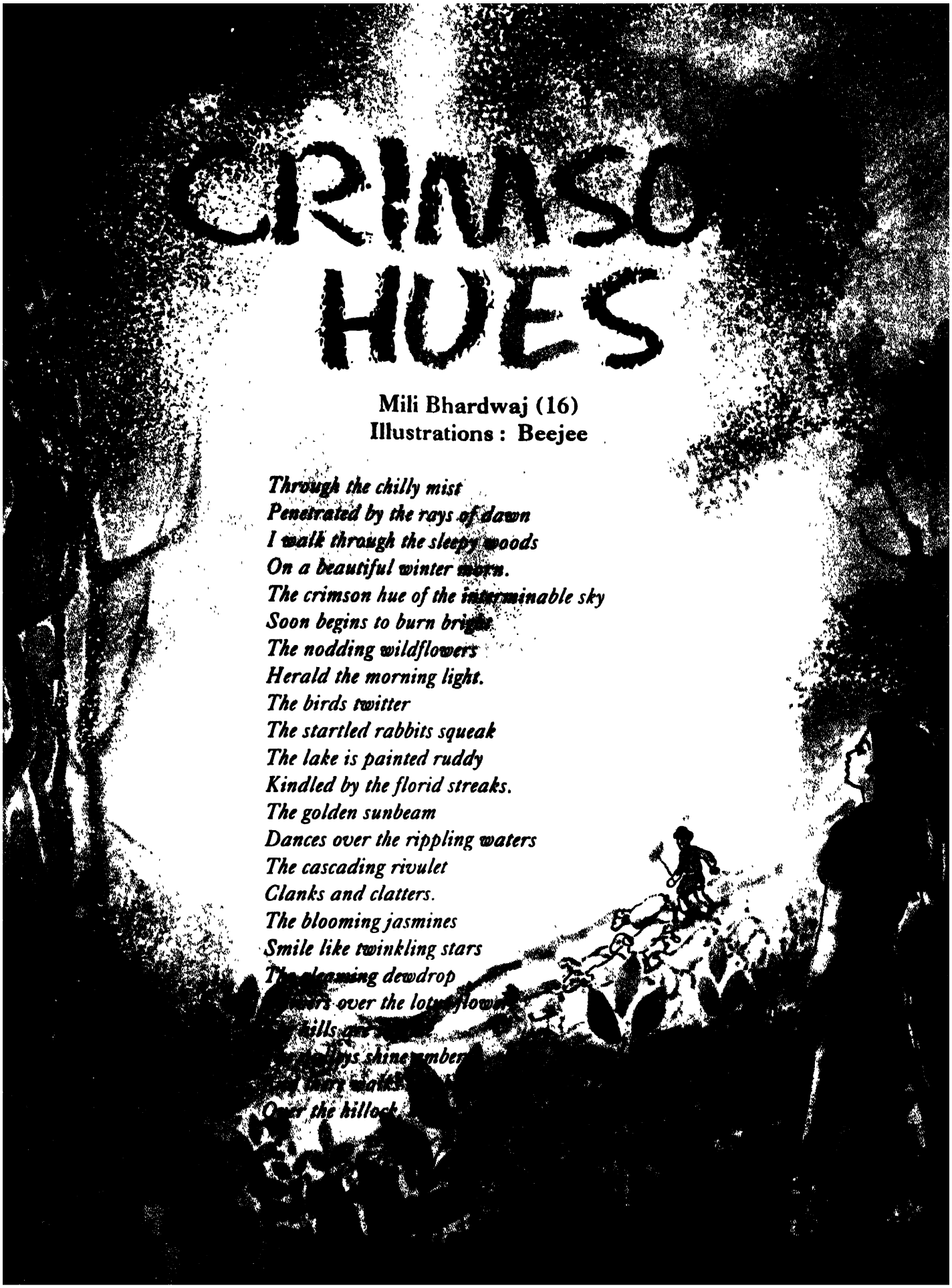
ACROSS

1. Promoter of the Hindi language, Bharat Ratna 1961 (11,3,6)
6. Birthday celebrated as Teachers' Day (10,13)
8. Drafted a new Congress Constitution (5,7,7)
9. Simant Gandhi (4,5,6,4)
11. The young mathematician (9,9)
12. The Iron Man of India (11,5)
13. Founder of Arya Samaj, social reformer (8,9)
14. Nobel Prize winner (Science) (1,1,5)
18. Founder of the Benares Hindu University (5,5,7)
19. 'Loknayak' (3,7,7)
20. 'Jai Jawan Jai Kisan' (3,7,7)
21. The first and middle name of the person who wrote 'Vande Matram' (6,7)
22. First President of India (8,6)

DOWN

2. Father of the Nation (8,10,6)
3. President of the Indian Constitution Draft Committee (7,8)
4. Nobel Laureate (Literature) (12,6)
5. First Prime Minister (10,5)
7. 'Lokmanya' (3,9,5)
10. Freedom fighter, known as 'Tiger of Punjab' (6,3)
11. Founder of the Azad Hind Fauj (7,7,4)
16. 'Mother of Indian Revolution' (9,4)
17. Woman freedom fighter, Three 'A's (5,4,3)





CRIMSON HUES

Mili Bhardwaj (16)
Illustrations : Beejee

Through the chilly mist
Penetrated by the rays of dawn
I walk through the sleepy woods
On a beautiful winter morn.
The crimson hue of the interminable sky
Soon begins to burn bright.
The nodding wildflowers
Herald the morning light.
The birds twitter
The startled rabbits squeak
The lake is painted ruddy
Kindled by the florid streaks.
The golden sunbeam
Dances over the rippling waters
The cascading rivulet
Clanks and clatters.
The blooming jasmines
Smile like twinkling stars
The gleaming dewdrop
[illegible] over the lotus flowers
[illegible] hills and
[illegible] valleys shine amber
[illegible] fairy waltz
Over the hillock.

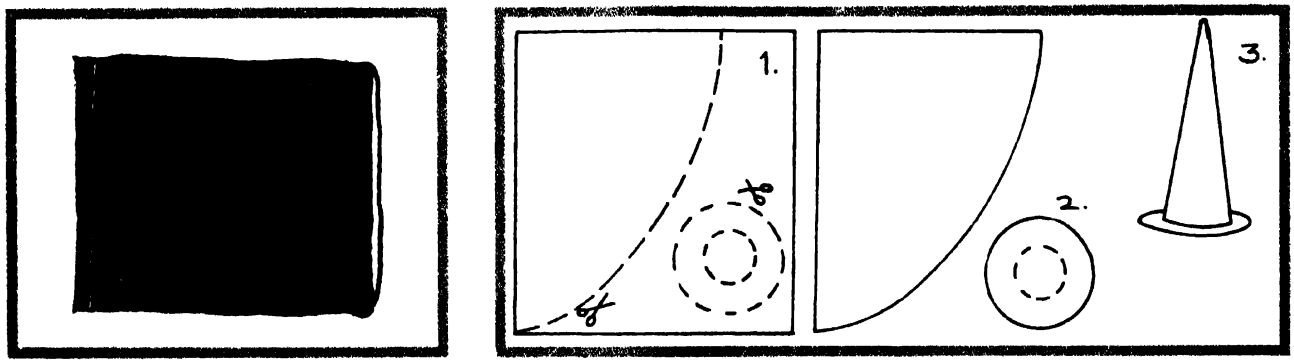
HALLOWEEN IN OUR SCHOOL

DURING the English workshop we read something about HALLOWEEN. Halloween is not an Italian tradition, but we decided to celebrate it at school dressing up as witches. On October 30, we found some dresses—witch dresses—at school, but they weren't enough for all of us. So, we made them by ourselves and, you know what, we used big black, plastic rubbish bags!

Actually, for each dress we used two big, black, plastic rubbish bags: one for the skirt and one for the blouse.

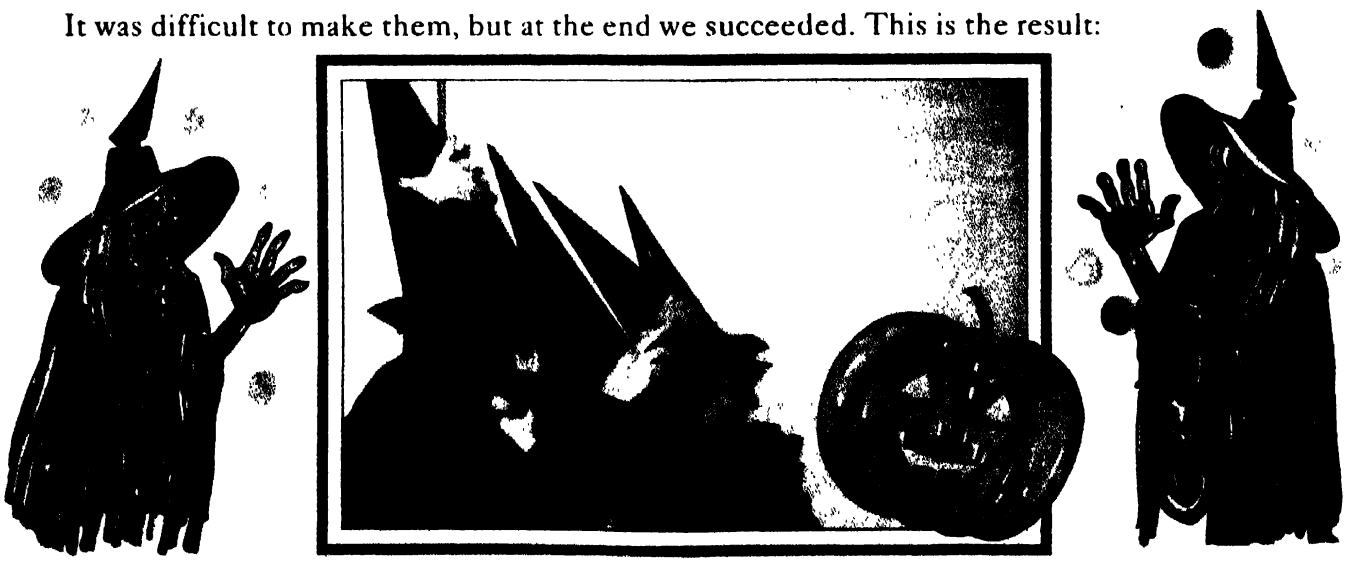
But the most important part of our dress was the HAT.

This is the project for the hats:



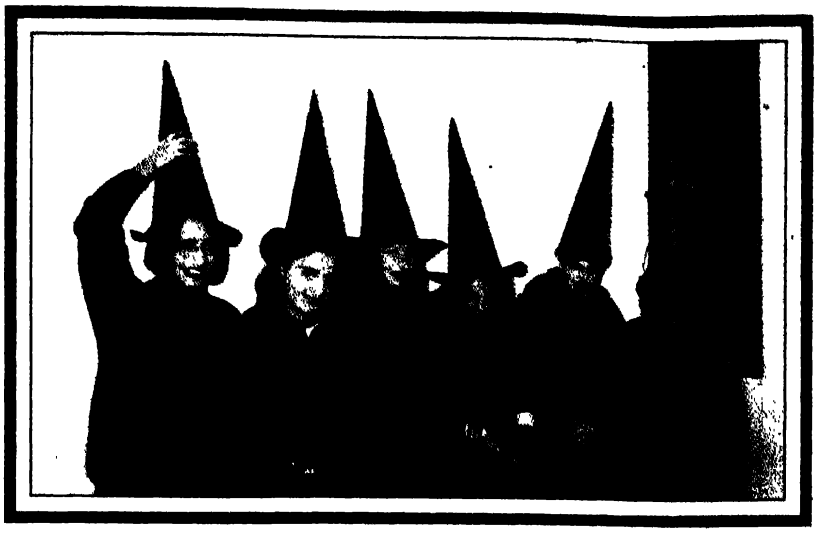
Plastic bag

It was difficult to make them, but at the end we succeeded. This is the result:



Now everything was ready: the dresses, the hats and the broom. So, we arranged to meet on October 31 at 10 in the morning during the Italian lesson.

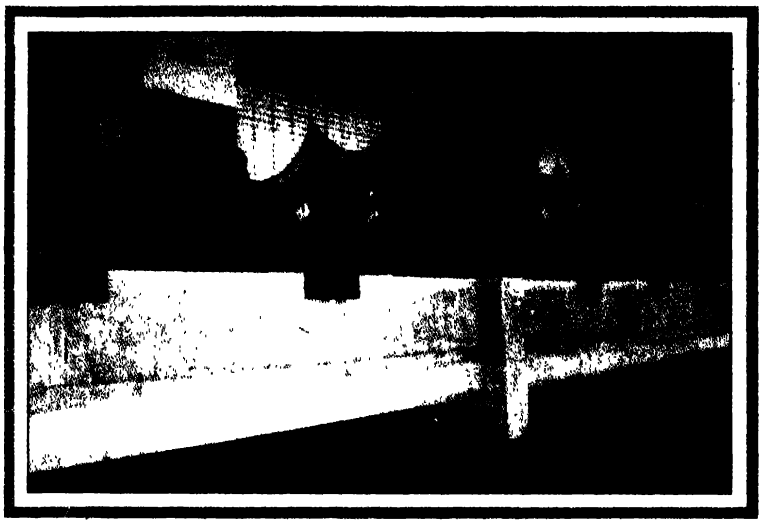
The day after, at exactly 10 o'clock, the English teacher knocked on the door and we went with her to the smallest and remotest room in the school to dress up as witches.



And .. here we are,
REAL WITCHES!







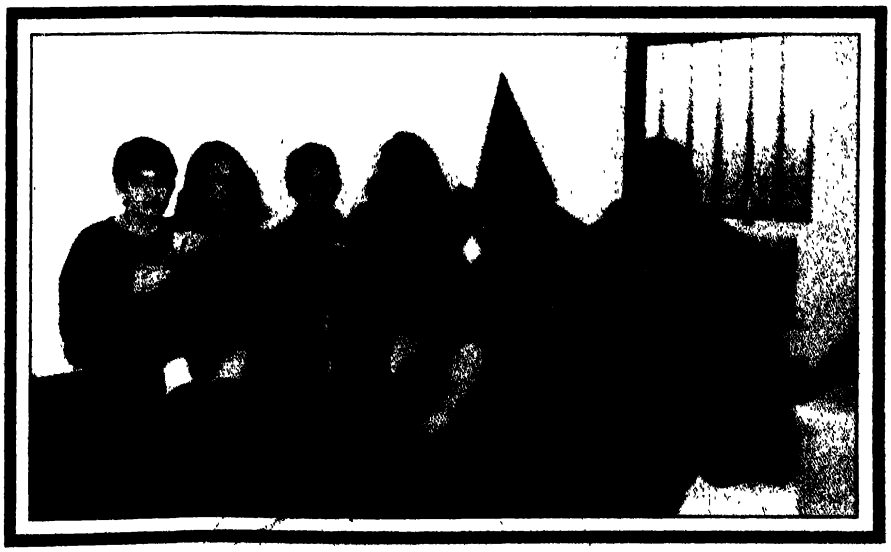
Then, we went around the school, visiting all the classrooms asking "TRICK OR TREAT?"

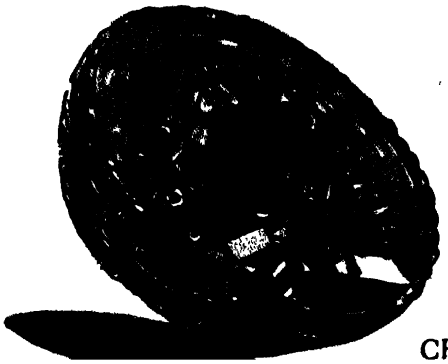
Some of our schoolmates gave us a lot of sweets and chocolates. But in the classroom, some naughty boys didn't give us anything and so we played tricks on them, for example, we wrote on their exercise-books and tests, with a pencil of course!

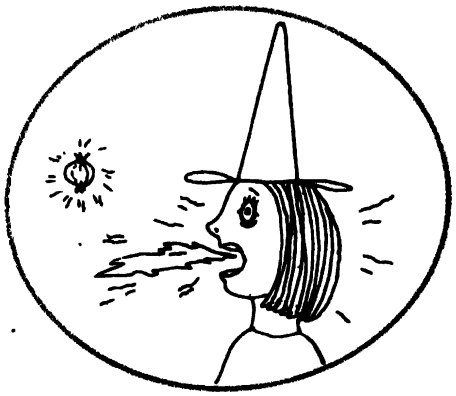
They were so frightened!

At the end, we got a basket full of delicious sweets.

We sat on the floor and started to eat all the wonderful candies.







They were fantastic! But suddenly, Federica made a strange face:

Something was wrong,...she screamed and jumped up, asking for permission to go to the toilet. She ran out of the room.

Then, she told us that someone had played a trick on her: someone had put a piece of garlic inside one of the sweets. The taste was REVOLTING!

We got changed and in our usual clothes we went back to our classroom. It was a very funny experience, especially for FEDERICA!

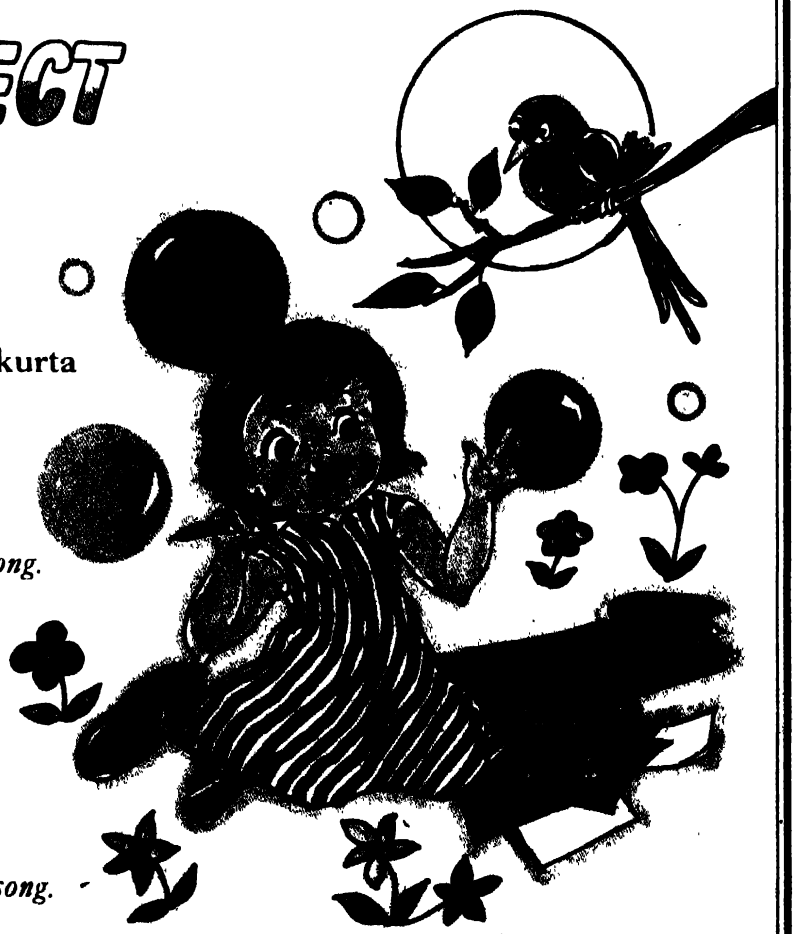
This project was made by a group of six pupils of Scuola Media Statale

Bariselli Sara (13)
Bazzardi Federica (13)
Farinon Fabio (13)
Forlani Eleonora (13)
Mercandelli Marisa (13)
Zanetti Luca (12)

Courtesy SICC 1996

THE PERFECT SONG

Ayesha Sindhu (11)
Illustration : Ajanta Guhathakurta



There comes a time,
When you need a perfect rhyme,
For your new song.
But when you write it, it comes out all wrong.

So if you can't find it.
Do what I do,
Sit down and think, of something new.

It may be right,
It may be wrong.
But it might just turn out to be the perfect song.

TONGUE TWISTERS

Text: Anita Prasad Illustrations: Ajanta Guhathakurta

THERE are moments when the programmes on the idiot box are literally idiotic. As if to add woes to worries, my piggy bank is drained of its last penny.

It was on one such occasion that my father enlightened me on how to keep myself amused sans the TV or the booty from the piggy bank. "I want to draw your attention with the intention of removing tension without any pretension," he began. "Repeat this as fast as you can," he egged me on. In no time, this word-play interested even my mother, and we all started an enjoyable 'tongue-twisting' game.

Indeed, tongue-twisters are not meant to be confined to the school environs but are to be tried elsewhere too.

Let us take a peek at some good old tongue-twisters. A few of them ask a riddle too. At parties tongue twisters lend a novel touch to party games breaking all age-barriers. To be a sort of 'Tongue-Twister MC', it would be better to rehearse them well before coaxing others to try them out.

Short and snappy ones would be ideal to set the ball rolling. Here are some you could try saying.

"Sister Susie's sewing shirts for soldiers."

"Slippery sleds slide smoothly down the sluiceway."

"A sniffer of snuffs is enough snuff for a sniff for the snuff sniffer."

Likewise, there are one-line teasers of which the popular ones are:

"Around the rugged rock the ragged rascal ran."

"I never felt felt feel flat like that felt felt flat."

"Sinful Ceaser sipped his sniffer, seized his knees and sneezed!"

"Quick cooking quaker oats."

They say that the last two (Sinful Ceaser... and Quick Cooking...) must be snap and sharp with no break.

In case, your neighbourhood boasts of a dentist or a specialist to treat aching jaws, this tongue-twister would be worthwhile.

"Betty Butter bought a bit of butter. 'But,' she said, 'this butter's bitter. If I put it in my batter, it'll make the batter bitter. But a bit of better butter'll make my batter better'. So Betty Butter bought a bit of better butter, and it made her batter better and her also better 'nd better."

However, the victor in reciting Betty Butter may fail when—"A skunk stood on a stump. The stump thunk the skunk stunk, but the skunk thunk the stump stunk."

As for the thistles and whistles, those using dentures must be refrained from trying and asked to bare their teeth only at the winner in the end.

"Theophilus Thistle, the

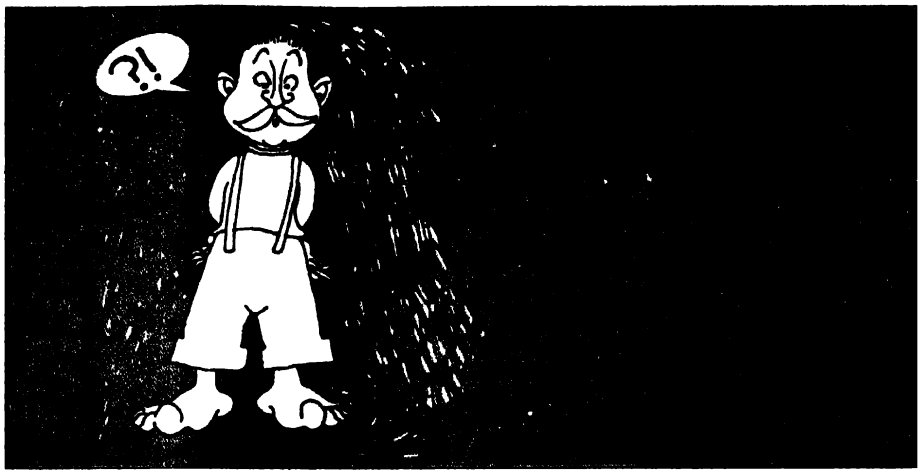


thistle-sifter, sifted a sieve of unsifted thistles. If Theophilus Thistle, the thistle-sifter, sifted a sieve of unsifted thistles, where's the sieve of unsifted thistles Theophilus Thistle, the thistle-sifter sifted?"

Rhyming twisters are aplenty. Perhaps you could try this:

"Moses supposes his toeses are roses, but Moses supposes erroneously. For Moses he knowses his toeses aren't roses, as Moses supposes his toeses to be."

Our very own Indian tongue twisters too need to be revived. On this score my father did wonder how many modern Bangaloreans recall *"Tarikere kuri mari..."* Perhaps, we could share many more and enjoy the thrills of tongue-twisters that cost nothing, but regale us for hours!





The treasure of Kumbher

Story : Krishna Narayan
Illustrations : Nilabho Dhar Chowdhury

Duler Singh tells Chandravati that Samba is dead and that Janki Devi has been taken away by Ismail Beg, who suspects her of plotting against him. Ismail Beg imprisons Prithviraj too and puts him in the same cell as Jai Singh who is barely alive. Chandravati manages to free Jai Singh and Prithviraj. They hide in their bed-ridden greataunt's room in the palace. Ismail Beg and Senor Noronha, after a confrontation, decide to join hands. They return to the palace to find that Jai Singh and Prithviraj have escaped.



Part 14

PRITHVIRAJ had no desire to eat. The knot of suspense and uncertainty that gnawed at his gut, coupled with the horrible stench that came from the cot killed the hunger within him. He turned away.

"You must eat," Chandravati's soft, steady gaze was upon him. "You must gather strength to fight the enemy."

Prithviraj was warmed by her concern and amazed at her fortitude. She was indeed a wonderful girl, the essence of Rajput womanhood. And how beautiful she looked, even in this moment of adversity! He wanted to speak of his feelings towards her but restrained

himself. This was not the time. He took the bowl of rice and the wooden spoon from the nurse and forced himself to swallow the food.

While eating, Prithviraj's mind was seized with the problem of finding a means to escape from the palace. Of himself he was confident, but what of Chandravati and Jai Singh? Idly he tapped the spoon on the stone floor while his brain searched for a solution.

Suddenly his attention was drawn to the peculiar, hollow sound that came from his tapping. He tapped again. Prithviraj got up, went over to where Jai Singh lay, and tapped the floor with the spoon. A sharp, solid sound reached his ears, quite different from the hollow tone earlier. He went back and tried again. Poonk! He turned wildly to Chandravati and found her staring at him.

"It is hollow beneath this stone, I am sure of it!" he whispered. He ran his fingers lightly along the floor till he came upon a hairline crack encrusted with dust. He removed the dust with his fingernail, and picked out, by and by, an indentation a foot across. With mounting excitement he persisted, till at last he had cleared a square block of stone.

Using the handle of the metal bowl as a lever, Prithviraj loosened one end of the stone and prised it clear of the floor. Then, inserting his fingers in the gap, he lifted the stone slab upright, to reveal a gaping hole beneath! Chandravati's hand went trembling to her throat. She gave Prithviraj a look of anticipation tinged with fear.

Prithviraj reached for the lamp on the wall and shone it into the aperture. A musty odour assailed his nose. A metal ladder, rusty with age, disappeared into the shadows. Prithviraj tested the first rung of the ladder. It sagged under his weight, but held. Gingerly, lamp in hand, Prithviraj descended into the darkness below.

At the foot of the ladder, Prithviraj held the lamp high so that its light fell around him. His eyes almost popped out of their sockets.

Heavy brass-studded wooden chests lined the room. Some of them were shut, but the ones that were open left no doubt as to their contents. Two chests were piled high with gold coins, two more with silver. Another was filled with jewellery that shone in the dim light like a star-spangled sky. Yet another contained urns, caskets and vessels cast in precious metal.

Prithviraj felt a hand curl around his own. He turned, and found Chandravati by his side, as awestruck as himself. This was why her father had moved her greataunt into the room above!

They had stumbled upon the treasure of the royal house of Kumbher!

* * *

Ismail Beg sat in the royal bedchamber, his head between his hands. For once, his aggressive nature had been beaten down into submission. He had invaded Kumbher at great cost to himself and his troops. It had turned to be a victory that tasted like ashes in the mouth. The look of utter contempt that Senor Noronha had given him set him on fire every time he thought of it. To think that he had been outwitted by a chit of a girl!

Abdel Khan had quickly formed two search parties. The search of the enclosed area had been carried out so as not to miss even a fly. Yet, incredibly, the prisoners had not been found. Every calculation, every logic dictated that they could not have gone far, but there was no trace of them.

Senor Noronha was resting in the guest chamber. The nocturnal ride from his camp had been tiring and fruitless.

Ismail Beg was shaken out of his reverie by a tinkling noise in his room. A little bell was ringing somewhere beneath his cot, sharp and persistent. Suddenly he recalled a snatch of conversation he had with the blind mason: 'The king had installed an alarm

without my knowledge, a bell that would go off in his bedchamber if someone entered the treasure room. That is how I was caught.'

Ismail Beg's eyes gleamed with excitement.

He wriggled under the cot, feeling his way towards the source of sound. He touched the bell, and his fingers strayed to the thin wire that ran from it along the wall. He followed the wire, cunningly concealed in the woodwork. The wire threaded its way to the next room and the next. Ismail Beg tiptoed along the rooms and the corridors. He finally reached the room occupied by the sick woman, the human



skeleton who had scared him out of his wits. He eased the door open with his shoulder. On the floor lay Jai Singh, motionless. In the opposite corner stood a stone slab, and beside it, a gaping hole. The shaft of light that emerged from the hole told him that someone was within.

Ismail Beg shut the door gently, and waited.

* * *

True to his word, Kunwar Singh tried to find out what had become of his cousins Jai Singh and Chandravati, but in vain. Every man in Ismail Beg's entourage had been put on their trail.

Kunwar Singh spent the rest of the morning contacting his lieutenants and putting them on the alert. Following Raja Balwant Singh's instructions, he had sent an emissary to Madhoji Sindhia asking for help. No longer was Kunwar Singh the sly, shifty-eyed ally of Ismail Beg. His resolve to make amends for his past misdeeds had given him a newfound dignity.

He was returning to his residence, when he was waylaid by an old woman he had never seen before. She fell at his feet blabbering with fright. What she was saying was so fantastic that he could not believe his ears. Chandravati, Jai Singh and another man were hidden in the palace, in Raja Balwant Singh's great-aunt's room!

Sensing that events were fast spiralling into a climax, Kunwar Singh broke into run.

* * *

A hand holding a lamp emerged from the square hole. A voice said, "Princess, do be careful!" and a moment later Prithviraj's head appeared. His face was turned sideways and down, as if he was watching the progress of someone behind him. He then straightened and looked around, and his eyes met those of Ismail Beg.

After a moment of shocked silence Prithviraj ducked out of view like a mouse into its hole. With a roar of triumph and pent up rage, Ismail Beg charged after him. He slithered down the ladder and landed in the strongroom. Then, with a slow, deliberate movement, he pulled out his dagger. Prithviraj knew it would be a fight to the death.

Prithviraj struck the lamp sharply against his thigh. The glass exploded and the room plunged into darkness. Simultaneously, he nudged Chandravati to safety behind him. His fingers searched the surface of the chest nearest him and curled around an object that felt like a statue. It was about eighteen inches long, and heavy. It would make a good weapon. He crept forward, ears tuned to catch the faintest sound. The room was silent as a tomb.

There was a rush of air to his

left, a clink of metal as a coin fell to the floor, and suddenly Ismail Beg was upon him. Prithviraj staggered back, his hands raised to ward off the blow. There was a spark as the blade of the dagger glanced off the metal statue. Ismail Beg reversed the handle of the dagger in his hand and swung again viciously, missing Prithviraj by a hair. Prithviraj brought the statue down where he thought Ismail Beg's hand should be. He struck an open treasure chest instead, sending hundreds of coins flying with the impact. Then Ismail Beg fell upon him once again. His left hand reached for Prithviraj's throat, his right hand curved to stab him in the back. Prithviraj gave a mighty heave, and Ismail Beg fell back against the row of chests behind him.

Prithviraj's eyes had got used to the dim light, and he saw Ismail Beg closing in. Prithviraj swung the statue and rapped Ismail Beg on the knuckles. The dagger clattered to the floor. The two men grappled with each other, their breath coming in short, hoarse gasps, filling the room with the sound. Chandravati hid in one corner watching them, fearful of the outcome.

Ismail Beg sandwiched Prithviraj against the rim of a box and forced him to arch backwards, inch by inch. Ismail Beg plunged his elbow into Prithviraj's abdomen, and Prithviraj doubled up in agony. Ismail Beg closed in to finish him off, when suddenly he let out a yell, raised his foot and hobbled around in circles. A shard of glass from the lantern had embedded itself in his heel!

With one bound, Prithviraj was at Ismail Beg's throat. He was about to bring the metal base of the statue down on Ismail Beg's head when a pleasant voice said, "I wouldn't do that if I were you, Prithviraj."

Prithviraj's arm stopped in mid-air. He turned in the direction of the voice. Senor Noronha stood at the base of the ladder, one hand on the rail, the other in the pocket of his breeches.

"Let him go," he said calmly.

Prithviraj was about to protest, but Senor Noronha's powerful command, the sheer force of his personality compelled Prithviraj to obey. Reluctantly he released Ismail Beg, who rubbed the base of his neck, retrieved his dagger and grinned at Senor Noronha.

"Ah, a pretty pile," said Senor Noronha. "This should keep us in luxury till the end of our days, eh, Ismail Beg?" He noticed Chandravati in the shadows, and bowed. "Honoured to meet you, Princess," he said. He turned to Prithviraj, "We will go up now. You have something to do for me."

Senor Noronha wrinkled his nose at the odour that hung in the air. He cast no more than a passing glance at Jai Singh lying inert in the corner. His pact with Madhoji Sindhia to safeguard the interests of the royal family was totally forgotten.

"You must be a happy man today, Ismail Beg," said Senor Noronha, stepping out into the corridor. "So am I. Your quest for the treasure is over. You have been recompensed for your persistence in the face of dire adversity. As for myself, it has been a long and expensive wait till fate threw us together as brothers-in-arms. As you rightly observed, beneath the skin we are alike; we are loyal to none but ourselves. I believe I shall be justly rewarded for saving your life."

Senor Noronha's back was towards Ismail Beg, and none but Prithviraj noticed the ugly shadow that flitted across Ismail Beg's face.

"Prithviraj, you shall ride to my camp, and have four ox-drawn carts and a platoon of hundred armed men despatched here." Senor Noronha's lips twisted into a smile, "I must have the treasure well escorted. One cannot be too careful."

Prithviraj hesitated. His eyes met Chandravati's and he saw the unspoken appeal in them. His conscience urged him to defy Senor Noronha's order, but how could he refuse the

man who had once saved his life?

"You have no time to waste," said Senor Noronha sharply, sensing Prithviraj's indecision. "Take your horse and be gone."

Prithviraj walked towards the gate, his head bowed. At the moment he did not know whom he hated more, Senor Noronha or himself.

Out of the corner of his eye he noticed a band of Ismail Beg's men, led by Abdel Khan, approach the palace from the direction of the outhouse. They were obviously returning after a fruitless search for the missing prince. On sighting Abdel Khan, Ismail Beg stepped back a couple of paces till he was directly behind Senor Noronha. With his left hand he gestured to Abdel Khan, urging him to close in. He then drew his dagger and flung it at Prithviraj. Chandravati let out a shriek.

Prithviraj ducked instinctively when he heard Chandravati's cry of warning; the dagger flew harmlessly past him. He whipped around in time to see Abdel Khan pounce upon Senor Noronha. For a split second he was tempted to turn back and defend him, but refrained; there were too many of them. Instead, he ran across the courtyard towards his horse. Some of Ismail Beg's men broke away and trailed behind him.

At that very moment Kunwar Singh appeared at the palace gates with some of his troops. With a tug of the reins he directed his mount to a gallop. His men followed him, yelling. Ismail Beg was startled at this new threat. Abdel Khan swung Senor Noronha's body around to cover his own, but he was too late. The forelegs of the horse caught him on his spine. Kunwar Singh's sword swung viciously and severed his head.

Ismail Beg looked about him, and made his move. He leaped like a cat onto Kunwar Singh's horse and strained to displace him from the saddle. Kunwar Singh struggled to remain upright, but years of soft living had taken its toll. He fell heavily to the ground. Ismail Beg seated himself firmly in the saddle, and cantered down the courtyard. "Somebody stop him!" shouted Prithviraj, leaping onto a horse to give chase. He could hear the clatter of hoofbeats going down the road at breakneck speed. Digging his heels into his horse, he spurred it in pursuit.

(To be concluded in December 1997)

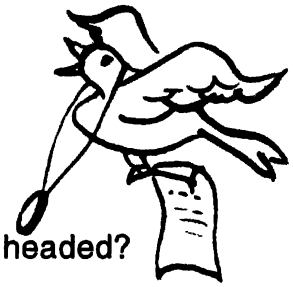




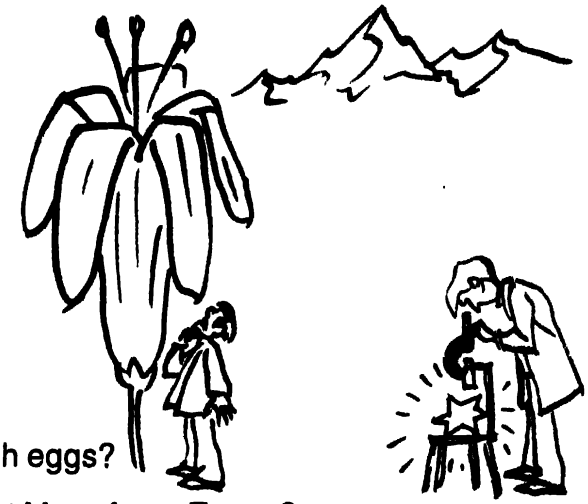
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By Sudha Sanjeev





1. Which year was observed as the International Year of the Child?
2. Who wrote the book 'The Pilgrim's Progress'?
3. What is the real name of the pop star Apache Indian?
4. Who is the founder of the Arya Samaj?
5. Who created the fictional character Dr. Watson?
6. What does the philatelic term 'denomination' mean?
7. When Christopher Columbus discovered America, where was he headed?
8. Which bird was awarded a medal in the First World War for carrying messages?
9. Which is the wettest place in the world?
10. Who is Mt. Everest named after?
11. Which is the land of the Long White Cloud?
12. Which is the largest flower in the world?
13. What is a group of seals called?
14. What are stars mainly made of?
15. Which animal has three eyes?
16. Which exotic and expensive food is actually fish eggs?
17. What is the name of the English woman novelist Mary Anne Evans?
18. Which country's official language is Magyar?
19. What does SAARC stand for?
20. What is the common name of the disease doctors called rubella?



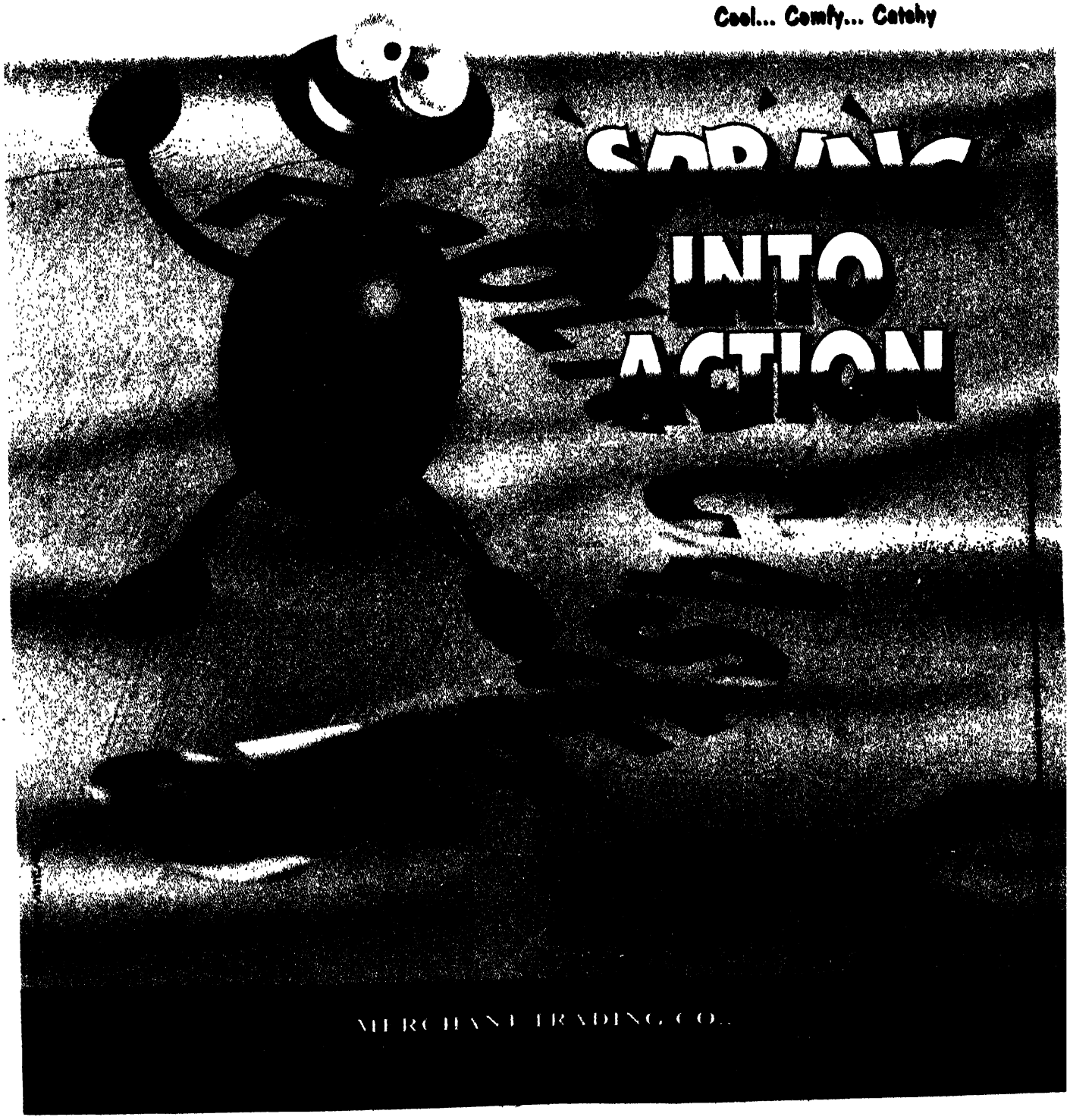


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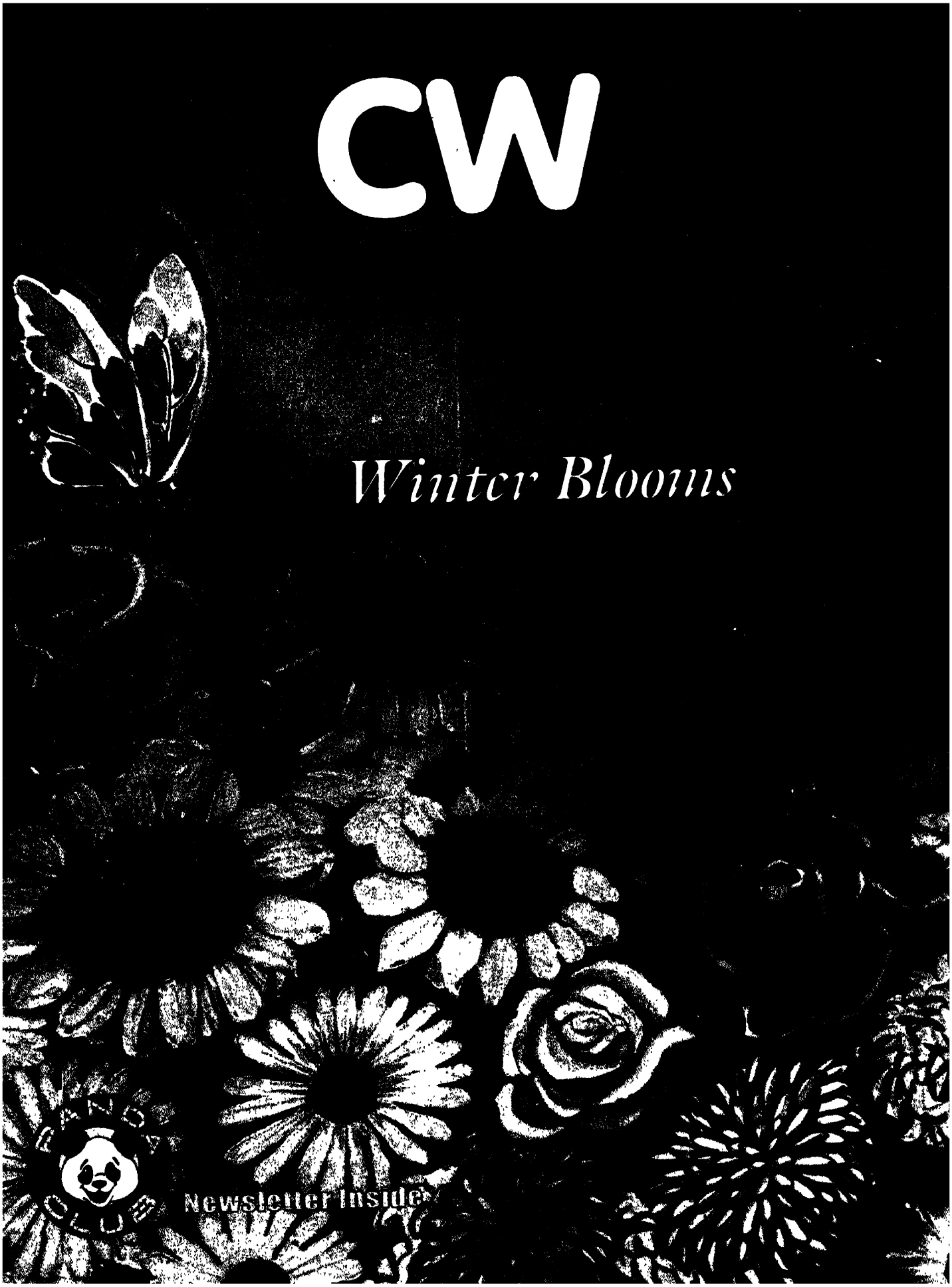


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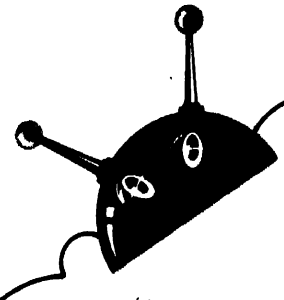


CW



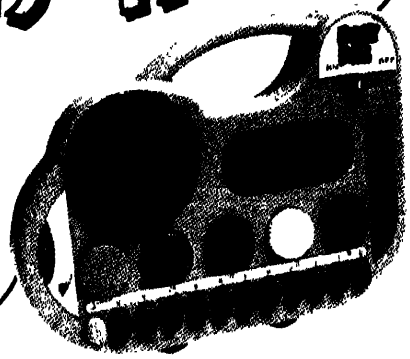
Winter Blooms

Newsletter Inside



YO!

...Pretty girls 'n freaky boys it's time you got these groovy toys.

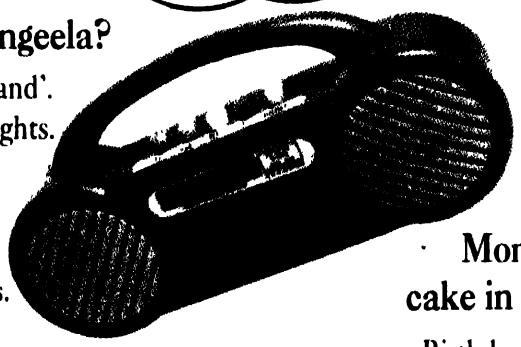


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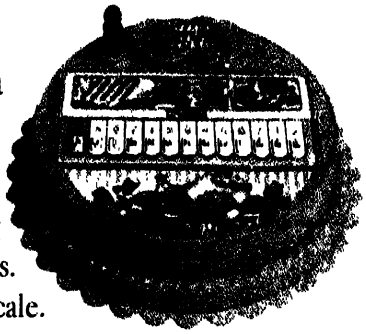
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CHILDREN'S WORLD

DECEMBER 1997
VOL. XXX NO. 9



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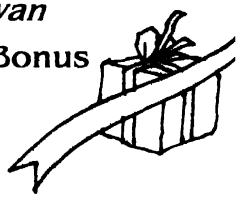
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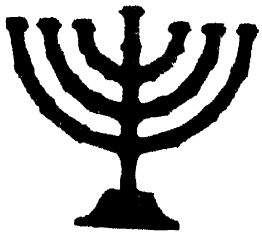
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Dear Readers,

The year is into its last month, quietly ebbing away, withdrawn, introspective. This is when we often look inwards and back, as well as think ahead of the year that will unfold. This is when we could ponder—have we, each one of us in our individual capacity, left the world a little happier than we found it last January? Life gives us chances galore with the dawning of each new day. Let us seize them and determine to make the world brighter than it was the previous day.

The spirit of Christmas and New Year is full of cheer, contagious. You will find it reflected in this issue. The cover with its brilliant blooms of winter will chase away the blues of the coldest day. So will the stories.

As old gives way to new, our thanks to all of you—writers, illustrators and readers—who have made CW a happy, fruitful experience the year through. With you beside us, we shall begin the new year, our faces turned to the sun.

In this season of benevolence, don't forget to spread your special brand of kindness and touch the lives of those less fortunate than you—consider giving away a cardigan to that scantily clad, scrawny, shivering figure wiping your car's windscreen at a traffic light; feeding the birds; passing on the leftovers of your lunch to a beggar...

Peace be with you.

Bhavana Nair

A MATTER OF VIEWS

Does any issue or event matter deeply to you? Share your views with other readers of CW. Write to: A MATTER OF VIEWS, Editor, Children's World, Nehru House, 4 Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi 110 002.

Dear Editor,

I read your magazine every month. There are many nice stories and I really like them. I have a suggestion. It would be wonderful if you could incorporate a jokes and riddles section.

Aziz [illegible] Khan,
New Delhi

Compliments, heartiest ones, on the new look of *Children's World*. The paper quality, layout and format are eye-catching. But there are fewer stories as compared to the earlier issues of CW. With every good wish to Children's World,

[illegible]

Dear Editor,

When I received the September issue of CW, I was very happy to read it. The cover was very attractive. The stories 'Think' and 'Spy Cat' were very nice.

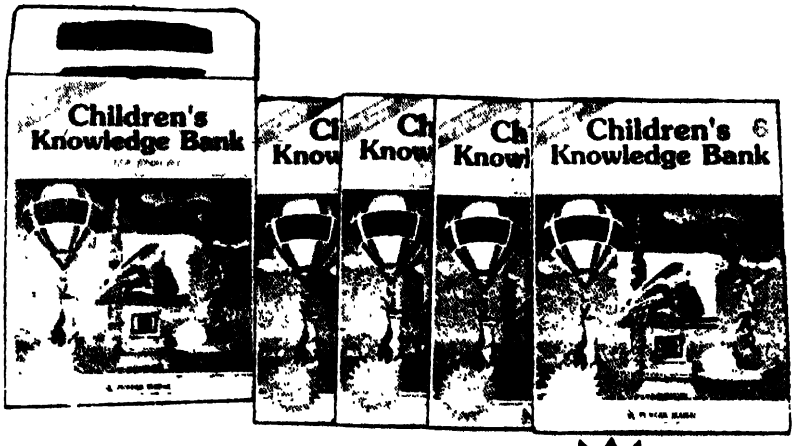
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PERKY'S A LETTER TO YOU



Dear hats and hattresses,

There is only one way to wear a hat—on the top of your head. That is what I thought. But Raghu made me feel I was wrong. As usual, Raghu has this expert way of making me feel that I've been born at the wrong time, at the wrong moment, in the wrong year, in the wrong neighbourhood and the wrong species. "You will make a nice sheep," he once told me. "Your hair is so curly it will make a nice sweater for somebody who's off the rocker."

Anyway, the hat. As I told you, I thought a hat can be worn only in one way—on the top of your head. But Raghu... goodness, goodness, goodness ...Anyway (gulp), Raghu was given a hat by some uncle of his who used to collect hats. (Yes, hats, the way sane people collect postage stamps and stickers and empty matchboxes. You should see my collection of matchboxes...I have...) Anyway, so Raghu was given a hat by an uncle who had decided to stop collecting hats and instead, start collecting shoe laces. Shoe laces! Some people are...

So, as I said, Raghu was given a hat. He showed it to me with great conceit. "It is a hat worn by kings and queens," he said in his awful, snob voice, "not queens actually but by kings and princes. Not princess like a sort of girl but princes, the young of kings."

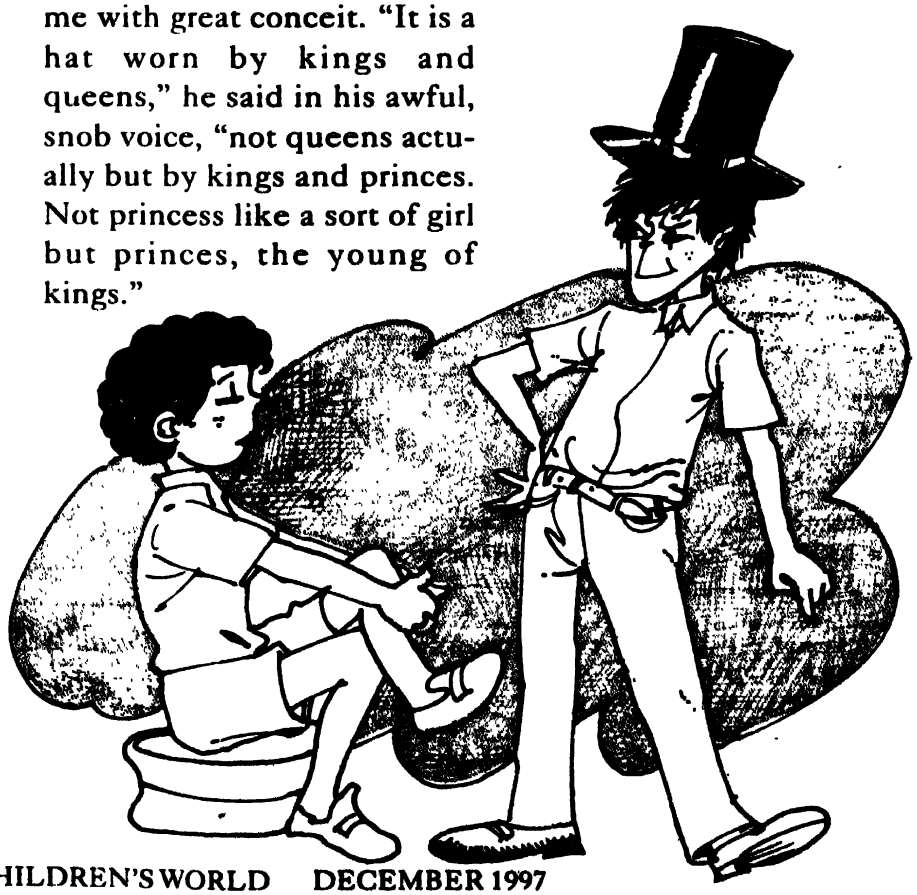
That hat, whether worn by kings or queens or their cooks, looked very ordinary to me. It was just a black column with a roof above and a brim down below. In fact, it looked just like the hat we used to draw in geometry classes when the teacher was not looking.

"Nice," I said in an indifferent way. Why should I bother about a hat worn by kings and cooks and probably the dog-keeper as well?

"Nice?" he asked in his superior, awful voice. "You call it nice? Let me tell you, a man who wears this hat will look like a king. A king! Do you hear? A king?"

"Or a queen," I murmured.

He glared at me and stalked off.



I thought that that was the end of the hat and me. Raghu never likes to be compared to queens or princesses or even to ordinary girls, for that matter. But again, I was wrong. The same afternoon, Raghu came to me carrying that hat and a small notebook. A small black notebook. He took up position in the middle of my room, held the hat in his right hand and the notebook (open) in the left hand and started screeching in his microphone voice.

"Style A. The hat worn with a slight tilt to the left is considered the mark of a true gentleman. It should be worn like this..."

And Raghu put the hat on his head, pushed it to the left till it came over his left eye and made him look like a brigand on holiday.

Then he cleared his throat.

"Style 2," he bawled. "Sorry, Style B. Here, the hat is worn to the back of the head like this...It marks the man as being a man of adventure and courage."

He put the hat on the back of his head and it fell off. I did not move.

"Style C," he shouted, glaring at me as he scrambled on the floor to pick up the hat. "Style C. The hat is worn slightly to the right so that it covers the right ear and jawline. This marks the man as a man of business and lots of money."

He put the hat on the right of his head and it hung crookedly over his ear like a crazy birthday streamer.

"Style 10," he went on. "Sorry, that's actually D, not 10. Style D. The hat is worn pushed to the front, covering the forehead and protecting the keen eyes of this man who may be a policeman or even a top class detective."

He pushed his hat down over his own stupid eyes and at that moment, Lini, our cat, streaked across the room like lightning, carrying with her the policeman or a top class detective with his idiotic eyes, his stupid hat and his silly notebook in one glorious heap of confusion. The hat, I am glad to say, was ruined beyond repair because Raghu fell on it and squashed it well and properly.

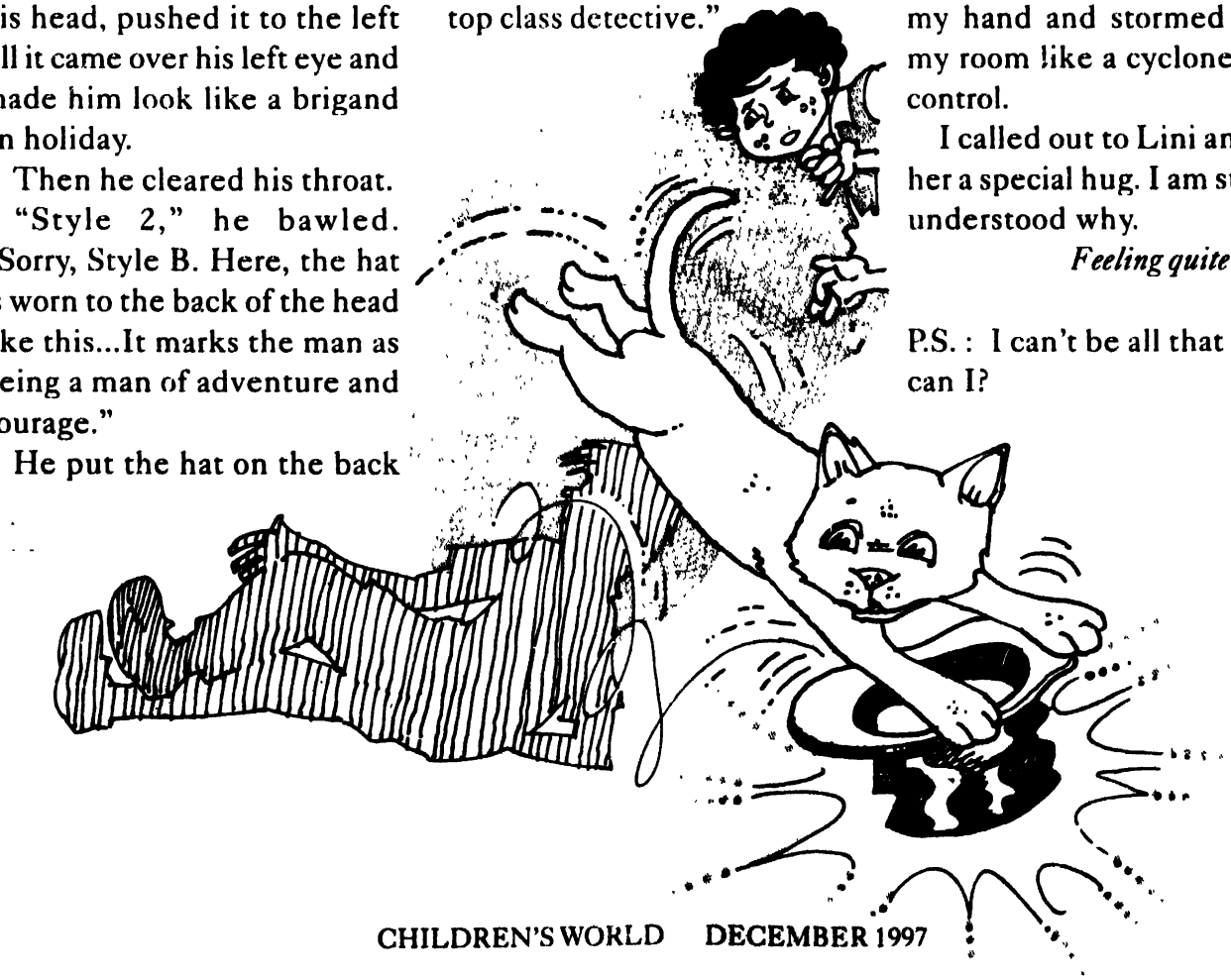
I picked up the notebook. "Style X," I read out. "The hat looking like a pickled tomato is placed on the floor, slightly to the left... This marks..."

Raghu snatched up his hat, plucked the notebook out of my hand and stormed out of my room like a cyclone out of control.

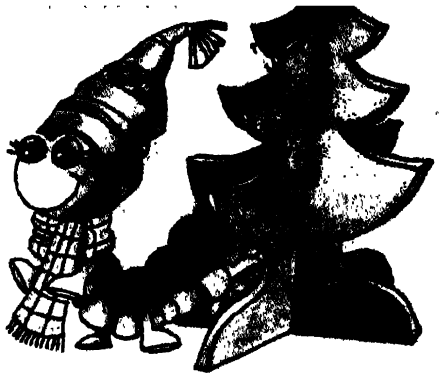
I called out to Lini and gave her a special hug. I am sure she understood why.

Feeling quite pleased
Perky

P.S. : I can't be all that wrong, can I?



GREET THE SEASON



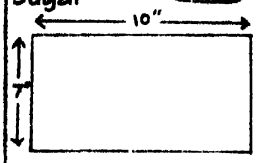
You need



Water

Powdered sugar

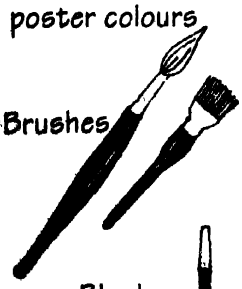




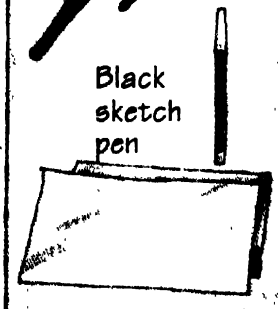
White or coloured card paper



Bright poster colours



Brushes

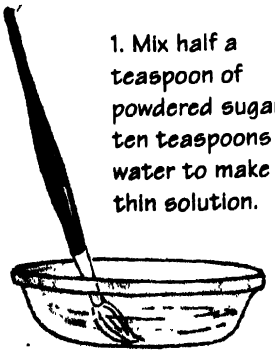


Black sketch pen

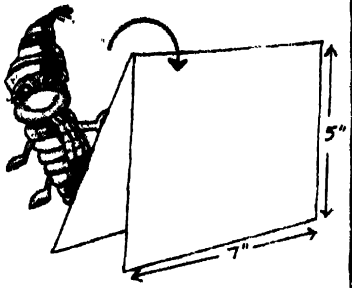
Gold and silver paper

Scissors

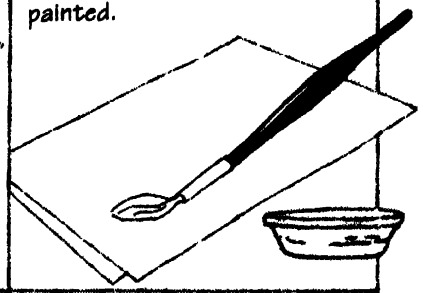
Glue



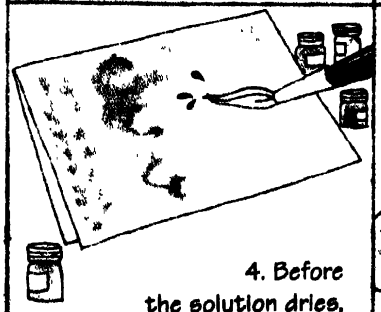
1. Mix half a teaspoon of powdered sugar in ten teaspoons of water to make a thin solution.



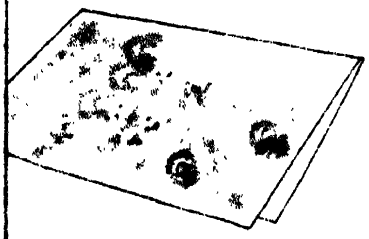
2. Fold the card into half.



3. With a brush, spread solution on the side to be painted.



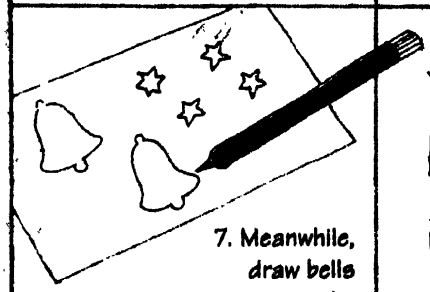
4. Before the solution dries, paint a pattern with different colours on it.



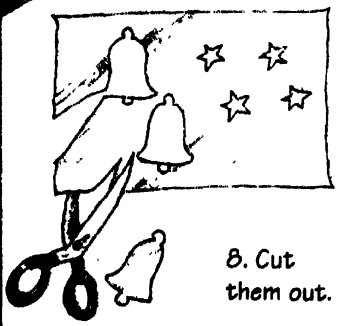
5. Watch the pattern blend with the solution.



6. Let it dry.



7. Meanwhile, draw bells and stars on the gold and silver sheets with a black sketch pen.

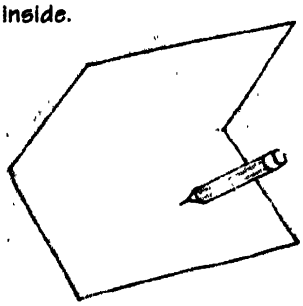


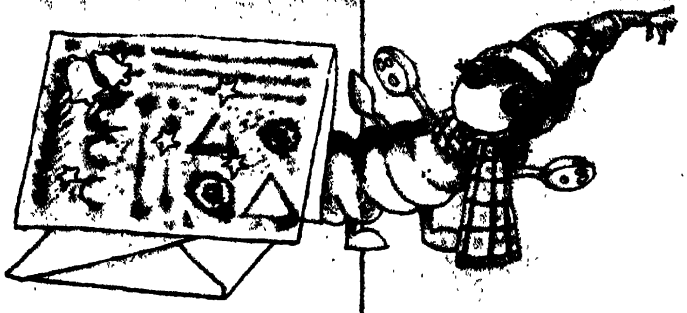
8. Cut them out.



9. Paste them on the painting that is now dry.

10. Write your message inside.





YOUR CARD IS READY!

By Ajanta Guhathakurta

LITTLE CUDDLES LOST



Story : Usha Bajracharya Verma
Illustrations : Subir Roy

THROUGH the study room window I watched my twelve-year-old son, Ansul, trudge down the road in the direction of his school. I was afraid that he might head out into the snow-covered fields to search for his missing Tibetan Terrier, Cuddles. However, he did not. Instead, he turned, waved me a bye and then walked on, his shoulders sagging in what I knew was resignation.

Seven days had passed since that Saturday morning when Cuddles did not turn up from his usual romp in the fields. Ansul had spent the entire afternoon searching the countryside for his dog. At times, during those anxious days, one of us would rush to the door thinking that we had heard Cuddles whimper.

By now we were sure that our Cuddles had either been taken by someone or struck down by a speeding car. But Ansul was the only one who refused to give up. The previous evening as I stepped outside to fill the bird feeder with seeds, I heard Ansul's plaintive calls drifting over the fields nearby. Finally, he came inside with tears of hopelessness shimmering on his eyelashes.

"I know that you think I'm silly, mum, hunting for Cuddles like that," stated Ansul. "But I've been asking God about him and I keep getting this feeling deep inside that my dog is out there somewhere..."

His remark made me wonder how he had obtained his strong faith in God. Perhaps the blow of losing his beloved grandfather so recently, at the age of ten, made him turn to



God for help and comfort.

Instinctively, I wanted to hold Ansul close and tell him that we could easily get another puppy if he so wished.

Something made me stop abruptly from broaching the subject. I remembered only too vividly the day, four years back, when we brought him his wriggling, black-and-white puppy.

"Oh, mum!" Ansul had exclaimed jubilantly, "he's so wriggly and cute and cuddly. I think I'll name him Cuddles!" So Cuddles he became.

The two of them soon became inseparable and although Cuddles was supposed to sleep in a basket, it was not long before I found him peacefully snuggled at the foot of Ansul's bed.

However, that night, as bedtime drew close, I did tell Ansul that he was carrying hope too far. Temperatures were low and I was sure that no lost animal could survive for long under such unfavourable weather conditions.

"Mum," said Ansul, "I know it sounds impossible but God said that if a sparrow falls from its nest, He would surely know about it. That must be true of dogs too, don't you think?"

What could I do as a mother, but gather him up in my arms and hug him? He said this with such innocent faith and conviction that he left me speechless.

The next day, after sending him off to school, I drove to my office where I forgot about missing dogs in the hustle-bustle of my pending work.

At 4.00 p.m., the telephone rang. It was Ansul.

"I'm home now, mum," he informed me. "I thought I'd go out to the fields and hunt for Cuddles."

His words twisted my heart into many knots.

"Ansul," I said trying to soften the irritation lurking at the edge of my voice, "please don't put yourself through that anymore. It is really cold outside and I don't know if there's a chance of..."

"But, mum," Ansul pleaded, his voice cutting me in mid-sentence, "I have this feeling that he's alive. I've just got to try, for Cuddles' sake!"

"All right," I conceded, exasperated at his persistent faith that Cuddles would eventually turn up at our doorstep.

After talking to me, he took off through the fields where he and Cuddles had been many times before. He had walked half a kilometre when he heard some dogs barking. The animals sounded like they were captured and penned. So he headed in that direction. Suddenly, as if he had made up his mind and for a reason he could not determine, he found himself walking away from the barking.

Soon Ansul came to a railway crossing. He heard a train coming and stopped to watch it chug by. Wondering if the tracks would be hot after the train ran over them, he climbed up on the embankment and felt them. They were as cold as ice.

Now, not knowing what to do, he pitched a few rocks and finally decided to walk down

the tracks to where he had heard the dogs barking previously. As he stepped down the tracks, the wind blew in gusts and he shrugged his jacket a bit closer to his body.

Then everything became quiet. Something made Ansul stop dead in his tracks and listen. From a tangled fence nearby came a faint whimper. He strained his ears in the direction of the sound.

Ansul tumbled down the embankment, his heart pounding in suspense. At the fence now, he pushed some growth apart to find a pitifully weak Cuddles, dangling by his left hind foot, caught in the rusty strands of an old fence. His front paws were barely touching the ground. The snow around him was eaten away. It had saved him from dying of thirst. Also his left hind paw would later require surgery, but right now, Cuddles was bound to survive.

When I returned home from office, I saw him from the kitchen window. His figure was bent and he was carrying something in his arms. As he approached, I saw that it was Cuddles. Stunned, I rushed outside to greet him.

"How in the world...?" I questioned in wonder and awe.

"God told me," whispered Ansul quietly.

Inside, in the kitchen, a very thin Cuddles lapped up a bowl of warm milk with a deliriously happy boy next to him. Every now and then Ansul petted Cuddles, whispering endearments into his rigid and upright ears.

Finishing, Cuddles looked up at Ansul. In the little dog's adoring eyes I saw the innocent faith that had sustained him through those arduous days, the trust that his master would come and rescue him from the cruel and biting fence that had mercilessly held him captive and helpless.

I looked over to my son, who had gone out with innocent faith, with his heart and soul open to God, and despite all logic, was guided kindly to Cuddles' side.



GOING PLACES

GOA



Text : Brinda Gill
Illustrations :
Ajanta Guhathakurta

ON THE west coast of India, along the Arabian Sea, stretches Goa, a lush State with many towns and villages that dot the beaches and hills. Cutting across this land full of greens and blues, you see paddy fields, tile-roofed houses, churches, busy bazaars, wooded hills and rivers hemmed in by endless beaches. Away from the sea are Hindu temples with elaborate lamp towers.

Goa's history is traced to the third century B.C. when it was ruled by the mighty Mauryas. It was part of a succession of Hindu empires till 1312 A.D., followed by the Islamic rulers of Gulbarga and then Bijapur. Lastly, it was the Portuguese, under the command of Affonso de Albuquerque in 1510, who made Goa their home for over 400 years.



This brief background sums up the intermingling of people and cultures here. The Portuguese had arrived in India with a view to trade spices. They were successful in capturing the spice trade to Europe from the Arab merchants. Their stately ships sailed back to Europe, laden with spices—mostly pepper, jewellery, textiles and handicrafts. They



stayed on in Goa, embellishing the city with a fort, palaces, houses, churches, gardens and markets reminiscent of Portugal. Goa became the capital of all the Portuguese possessions in Asia and East Africa. Velha Goa, now Old Goa, grew into a rich and beautiful city, attracting sailors and scholars, traders, missionaries, adventurers...Later, a calamitous epidemic led residents of Velha Goa to flee southwards to set up a new city of Panjim. Goa was absorbed into the Indian Union in 1961 and Panjim is its capital.

Since 1961, there has been greater interaction between Goa and the rest of India; traditional culture and modern, urban culture which Goa has been able to absorb, and her people have always lived in harmony. Anyone used to seeing an urban spread of structures is surprised to see bungalows with no defining compound set amid palms. An easy pace of life, sunny weather for nine months in the year, lush vegetation and a safe life attract tourists.

Panaji, as the capital is called, is a picturesque town, with avenues and tile-roofed colonial buildings. It is centred on the Church of Immaculate Conception, built in 1541; its, tall twin towers were reminiscent of 'home' for sailors who arrived in Goa after months of sailing from Portugal. The Secretariat, the seat of Government, is housed in what was once the palace of the Adil Shahi kings and later the Portuguese Viceroy. The shopping areas where one can pick up numerous things from crafts to cashewnuts are located around well laid out squares and green parks.

The River Mandovi flows along the city. A broad promenade provides space for a leisurely ramble terminating in the city's only beach, Miramar. Across the river is the Reis Magos, a 16th century fort



which once guarded the access to Goa, and Aguada, a 17th century fort. In the evening, a gaily lit boat, 'Santa Monica', takes visitors on a cruise on the river with a band playing Konkani, Hindi, Portuguese and English tunes. About seven kilometres west of Panaji is Cabo Raj Niwas, the official residence of the Lieutenant-Governor. It is a striking building with elevated verandahs looking out at the sea.

Goa's greatest attractions are the beaches, a welcome change, specially for those who do not live near the sea. The beaches stretch on and you could walk for hours along the sea. In the mornings, one can watch the fishing boats return from sea and men slowly drag in huge, circular nets through the waters sieving in



their catch. Shacks serving Goan food dot the beaches, the Goan speciality of fish curry and rice being a real treat. Of course, for the more adventurous there are many water sports.

If you want to see some of Goa's beautiful churches then head for Old Goa which was once a thriving and prosperous city surrounded by fort walls, towers and a moat. Little remains today of the great medieval port and prosperous, bustling Portuguese centre except for several monumental churches that hint of the past. Se Cathedral, the Church of St. Francis of Assisi and the Basilica of Bom Jesus stand in secluded splendour in a wide open square. Se Cathedral, the largest church in Asia, has an 80 metre long aisle with a carved gilt altar and is built in Portuguese-Gothic style. There were originally two towers of which one survives, housing a large bell, famous for its rich sound. The main altar is dedicated to St. Catherine of Alexandria. Once within, the spacious interiors and high ceilings, the huge gilded altars, rich and intricately ornamented side chapels convey the power and grandeur they witnessed. The Church of St. Francis of Assisi has carved woodwork and old murals. The Cathedral of Bom Jesus is one of the holiest places of worship for the Goan Catholic, as the remains of St. Francis Xavier are preserved there in a silver and glass casket. Beyond the Church of St. Francis of Assisi is a small museum, which houses some magnificent statuary and archaeological artefacts that date to pre-

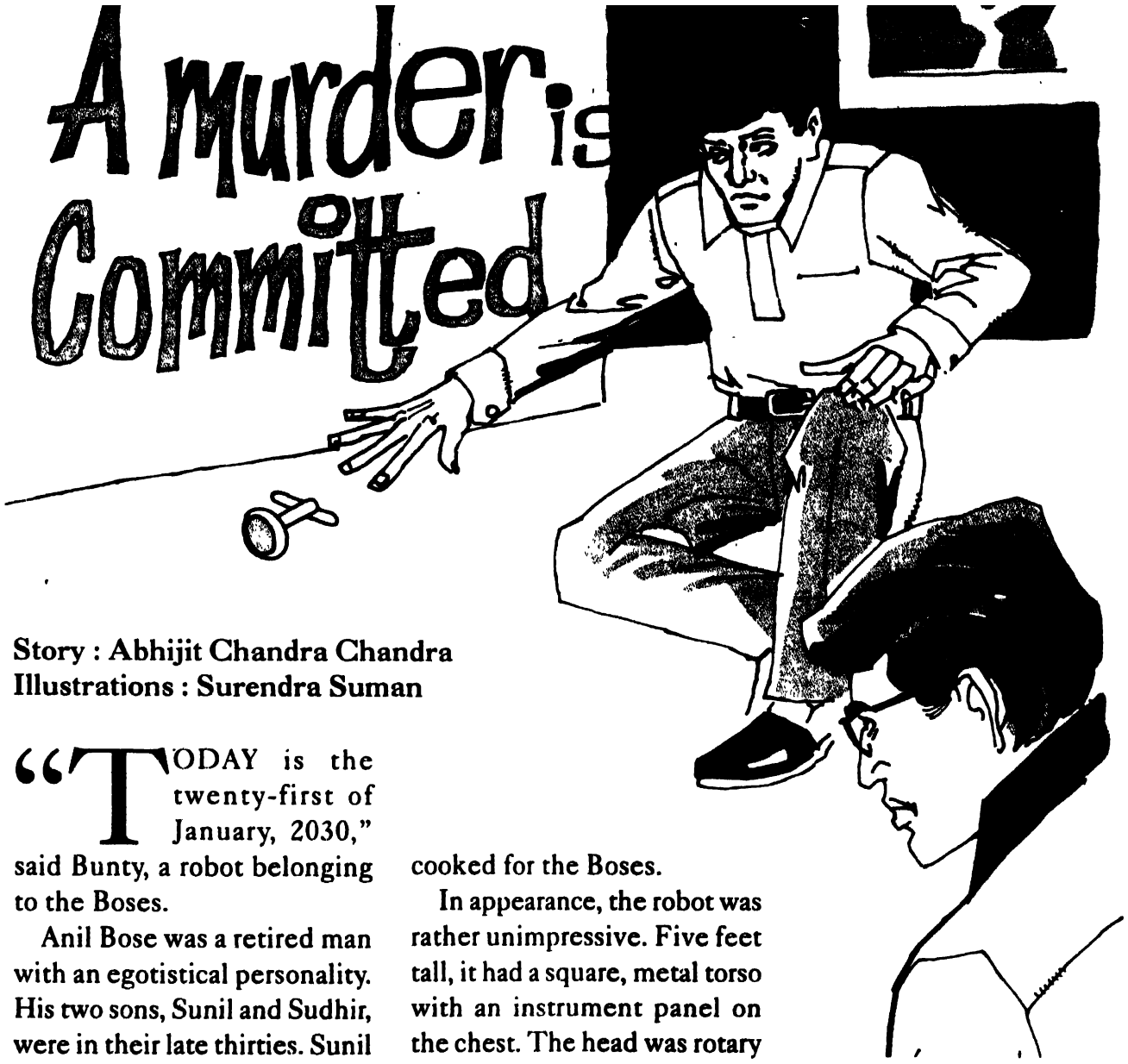


historic times. There are also interesting stone sculptures from the Hindu period of Goan history and a collection of oil paintings from the Portuguese period.

A short distance away from the main square of Old Goa is the smaller Church of St. Cajetan, modelled on the original design of St. Peter's Church in Rome, beside which is a seminary. The Gateway of the Viceroys lies beyond St. Cajetan. There are other seminaries and nunneries here, concealed by tall trees and undulating countryside. A surviving 46 metre high tower of the Church of St. Augustine overlooks this fragment of history, of ruins lost to overgrowth.

During feasts, villages and towns come alive, as brightly decorated images of the saint are carried by priests and devotees to the chanting of prayers and the accompaniment of music. Music forms an important part of life in Goa, which has seen many renowned singers of both popular and classical music, coming from the State graced by nature's bounty and content people.

A murder is Committed



Story : Abhijit Chandra Chandra
Illustrations : Surendra Suman

"TODAY is the twenty-first of January, 2030," said Bunty, a robot belonging to the Boses.

Anil Bose was a retired man with an egotistical personality. His two sons, Sunil and Sudhir, were in their late thirties. Sunil was a calm, well-balanced man. Sunil's wife, Sushma, taught at a primary school. Sudhir generally kept to himself. He had once spent three months in a lunatic asylum. Manohar was Anil Bose's younger brother. They seldom saw eye to eye. Anil Bose's wife, Aparna, was the binding force of the family.

The Boses preferred to call the robot by a name. Bunty looked after the house and cooked for the Boses.

In appearance, the robot was rather unimpressive. Five feet tall, it had a square, metal torso with an instrument panel on the chest. The head was rotary and had two lenses for eyes. Sunil called Bunty a 'knight in shining armour'.

But the robot could do real wonders. Whatever the eyes 'saw' was recorded in a special cassette within it. Two arms helped Bunty perform its activities; it also carried within its body, a tool box. In a metal holster on its left side, the robot carried a lethal laser to protect the house against burglars.

Life was routine for the Boses...The lull before the storm?

Bunty had just finished announcing the date when the calm was shattered by a blood-curdling scream from Anil Bose's room. In half a minute the entire family was there.

It was Aparna Bose who had screamed. Anil Bose was seated at his desk, his head resting on some files on the study table. His arms hung

loosely at the sides, eyes wide open and unblinking. Lying on the floor, near his chair was the bronze image of Alexander he had purchased recently. There was a dark, almost black, stain at the back of his head. There were splashes of blood near him. The table lamp was still burning.

Sunil slowly approached the desk and felt his father's wrist. Anil Bose was dead. Sunil took his weeping mother to her room while Manohar took Sushma to hers. Only Sudhir stood there, staring dumbstruck.

In about three minutes both men returned. Manohar was the first to speak, "I simply can't believe it...I think this..."

His words were cut off by Sudhir who shrieked, "You've done it, I know you've done it!" His forefinger pointed to his uncle.

"What are you saying, Sudhir?" Sunil grabbed his brother's shoulders.

Manohar Bose took a deep breath and reached for the phone.

*

"May I have a word with you, Mr. Sunil?" asked Inspector Ghosh, later. "Did your father have any enemies?"

"None I know of," replied Sunil. "*Baba* retired five years ago ..."

"He was a Reader in Psychology at the University?"

"Yes. Since then, he has been working at home."

Ghosh leaned back in his chair, "Evidence shows the murder took place at around ten-thirty last night. Where were you last night?"

The change in tone made Sunil look at Ghosh. He caught the investigator's steely glare.

"I went out for a movie. My wife Sushma and my mother were with me," Sunil said reaching into his purse and taking out three tickets.

Ghosh examined them and handed them back.

"That would mean Sudhir and Mr. Manohar were in the house."

"But you can't possibly suspect either of them!" Sunil shouted.

Ghosh rose to his feet. "At this moment, I will not say anything. But I'll certainly come back."

*

"You say uncle's head was resting on the table?"

Sunil nodded. With him was Sengupta, a fair man, about six feet in height.

"Sengupta, you must solve this," Sunil's voice was tense, as he spoke to his friend.

"Don't worry," Sengupta put a reassuring hand on Sunil's shoulder. "We'll find the murderer..."

The tall man bent and picked up a small object. It glinted as he held it against the light. "Whose cuff-link is this?" he asked Sunil.

Sunil turned the cuff-link over. "I don't know. In our family, only my uncle wears them. But certainly he did not..." Sunil's face clouded over.

"I am not accusing him. Let us clear the matter with him."

Walking to Manohar's room, Sengupta knocked sharply and the men entered.

Sengupta began, "Sir, would you tell us about your activities last evening?"

"I was in my room all evening," Manohar Bose began hesitantly. "At ten, Bunty brought my dinner and soon after that I was in bed."

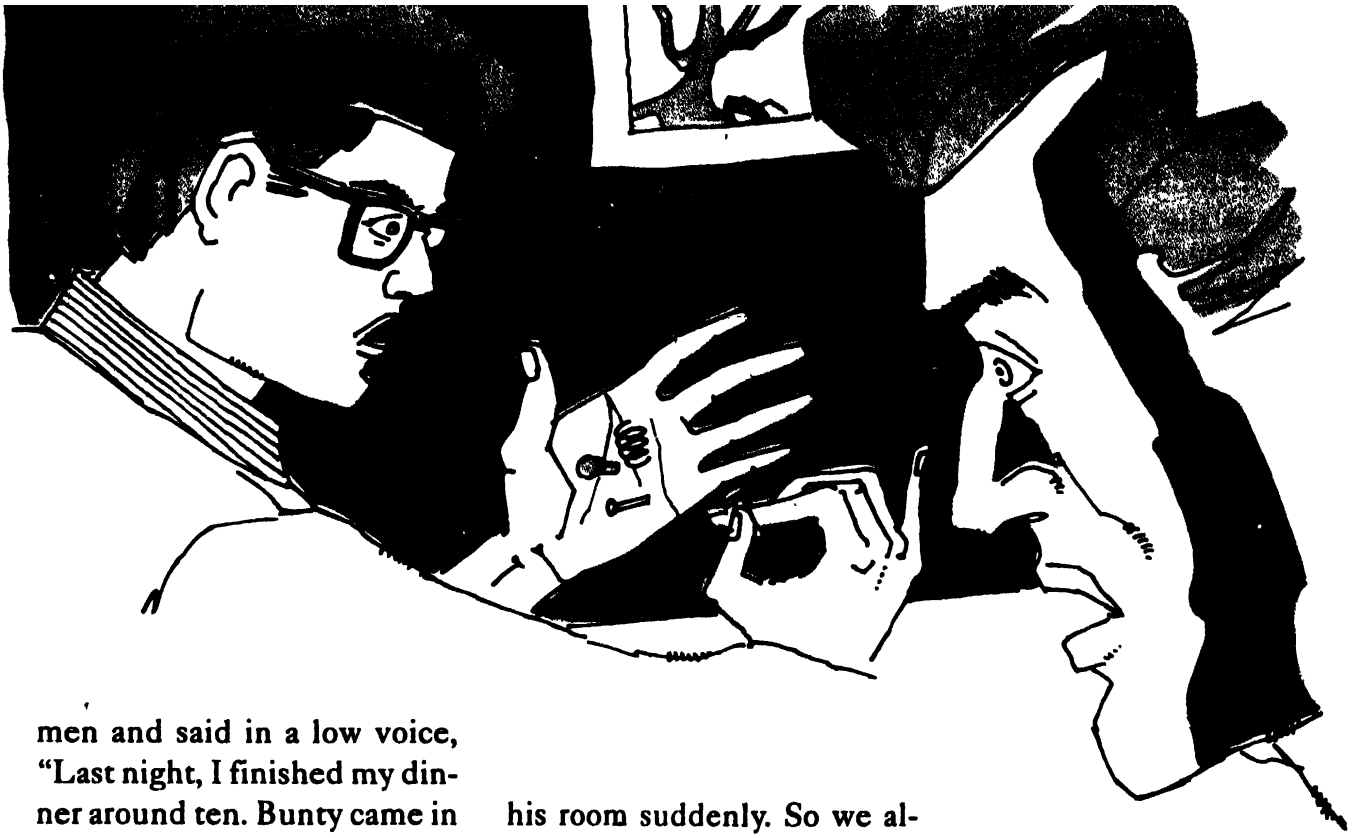
Sengupta brought out the cuff-link. "Whose is this, Mr. Manohar?"

Manohar looked from the cuff-link to Sengupta's grim face. "I..." he stammered, "I... it's mine...but I didn't do it. I did not kill my brother!"

"Mr. Manohar," said Sengupta, "please calm yourself. This excitement will not take us towards the solution."

Manohar sat down. "Tell us what happened," asked Sengupta.

Manohar looked at the two



men and said in a low voice, "Last night, I finished my dinner around ten. Bunty came in and said Anil wanted to see me. I went to his room. He showed me that bronze Alexander. We got into an argument about the age of the piece. Anil said I didn't have any idea of dating art pieces. I lost my temper and strode out. Returning to my room, I went to bed."

"Well, sir, that would mean you spent about ten minutes with your brother," Sengupta said. "And did you turn in immediately after coming back here?"

"Yes, I take sleeping pills; so I was asleep quite soon."

Walking down the corridor, Sengupta paused in front of Anil Bose's room. "What's this for?" he pointed to a switch just outside the door.

"Oh, that's a bell. Father did not like anyone coming into his room suddenly. So we always rang before entering."

Sengupta pressed the switch a couple of times. There was no sound. "It doesn't work."

"I don't know why," Sunil replied.

"I think we should find out."

They entered the room.

Sunil walked over to his father's chair saying, "The bell is here on the wall behind the chair."He was taken aback at what he saw. The bell had been dismantled and its parts lay scattered near the wall. Sengupta bent down and examined them. Finally, he picked up a few parts and put them into his pocket.

"Why should anyone do this?" Sunil asked in a surprised tone.

Instead of replying, Sengupta walked out of the room.

*

"Was Sudhir in his room all evening?" asked Sengupta. Sunil and he were in the sitting room.

"Yes," replied Sunil, "his room is upstairs. He's feeling very disturbed but I managed to ask him."

Sengupta suddenly snapped his fingers. "Bunty must have a recording facility?" he asked.

"Of course," said Sunil. "It has a special cassette which records all that it sees for thirty days at a stretch. It can be extracted and viewed."

"Quick," Sengupta was already on his feet.

Sunil summoned Bunty and after pressing a couple of buttons on its instrument panel,

extracted the cassette. Bunty was then asked to leave.

"I want you to replay the evening of the murder," said Sengupta as the cassette was loaded into the VCR.

A special feature of the cassette was that it showed the time at which the recording had been made. Sunil switched on the recorder and a scene of the dining room came into view. The time was ten minutes past ten. The men watched eagerly.

"To go into the corridor leading to your father's room a person would have to cross the hall. Except Mr. Manohar, of course, whose room is down the corridor," said Sengupta, his eyes riveted to the screen.

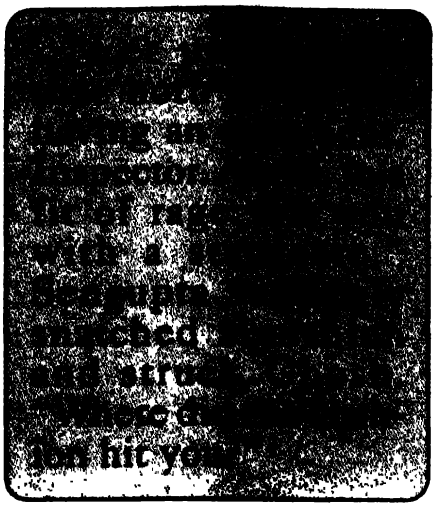
But nothing happened. No person crossed the camera. The scene remained unchanged till long after the clock crossed ten-thirty. Sengupta rose and switched off the monitor. "The mystery deepens. The three of you returned around eleven, right?"

"Yes," replied Sunil, "and we went to our rooms."

"I think I'll go now. There's some work at home," Sengupta extracted the cassette and continued, "If you don't mind I'll take this along."

"Certainly."

While crossing the dining room, Sunil introduced Sengupta to his mother and his wife, who were having tea. Sengupta focused his attention



on the table. "This is an antique, isn't it?"

"Yes," said Sunil.

Suddenly Sengupta picked up a porcelain ashtray from the centre of the table. In an agitated voice he said, "This ashtray is..."

His words were cut off by Sushma, "Isn't it pretty, Mr. Sengupta? Actually there was a different one a fortnight back. It was very similar but pink in colour. Pity it slipped from my hands and broke."

Sengupta was looking quizzically at the ashtray. Putting it down he bid goodbye to the family and made his exit.

"What was it that seemed to suddenly disturb your friend?" asked Aparna Bose.

"I...I don't know," Sunil replied.

*

"You may be wondering why I called you here, Inspector?" said Sengupta. "Gentlemen, I believe I know who the murderer is."

The two other men in the sitting room looked amazed.

"I think Mr. Manohar was suspected all along," continued Sengupta.

"But..." It was Sunil who interrupted.

Sengupta held up his hand. "Mr. Manohar is not the murderer."

"How can you be certain?" Ghosh was sceptical.

"It's quite simple. Your theory is that the brothers had a heated argument and Mr. Manohar struck his brother with the statuette."

"That's exactly my point," Ghosh said firmly.

"Let us imagine that both of us are having an argument, Inspector. And I, in a fit of rage, hit you with a statuette." Sengupta suddenly snatched a cushion and struck Ghosh. "Where did the cushion hit you?"

"On the head, of course!" said an irritated Ghosh.

Sengupta waved his hand. "Where on your head?"

"On this side."

"Exactly!" Sengupta said. "But Mr. Bose had an injury on the back of his skull. If two men are arguing across a table three feet wide and one of them hits the other, it is physically impossible for the injury to be at the back of the head. It can only be on the top or the sides." Realization dawned on the faces of the two men.

"You mean *Baba* was struck from behind?" Sunil said in a

hushed voice.

"Yes," Sengupta replied grimly. "Let us have a look at Bunty's video cassette." He loaded the cassette and adjusted it to the evening of the murder. The scene of the dining-room was just like before. "You notice anything odd about the scene?" Sengupta queried.

"It seems pretty normal to me, Sengupta," Sunil replied.

Sengupta adjusted the cassette again. The date was that of the day before the murder. The scene showed the Boses having their dinner. The camera kept shifting since Bunty was serving the meal.

Sengupta froze the picture suddenly. The dining table was in view. "See that ashtray in the centre," he said indicating a beautiful, green porcelain object. Sunil and Ghosh stared vacantly.

The cassette was reversed to fifteen days before the murder. A pink ashtray was seen on the table. Sengupta then returned to the evening of the murder to show the pink ashtray again on the dining table.

"Mr. Sengupta," said Inspector Ghosh exasperatedly, "what are you trying to tell us?"

"Simply this. Earlier, Sushma told me that the pink ashtray had broken some days back when it fell."

"That's true," said Sunil, "it broke at dinner time. We all saw it happen."

"Exactly, so she replaced it with the green one. But then, how does that pink ashtray make a reappearance on the table on the evening of the murder?"

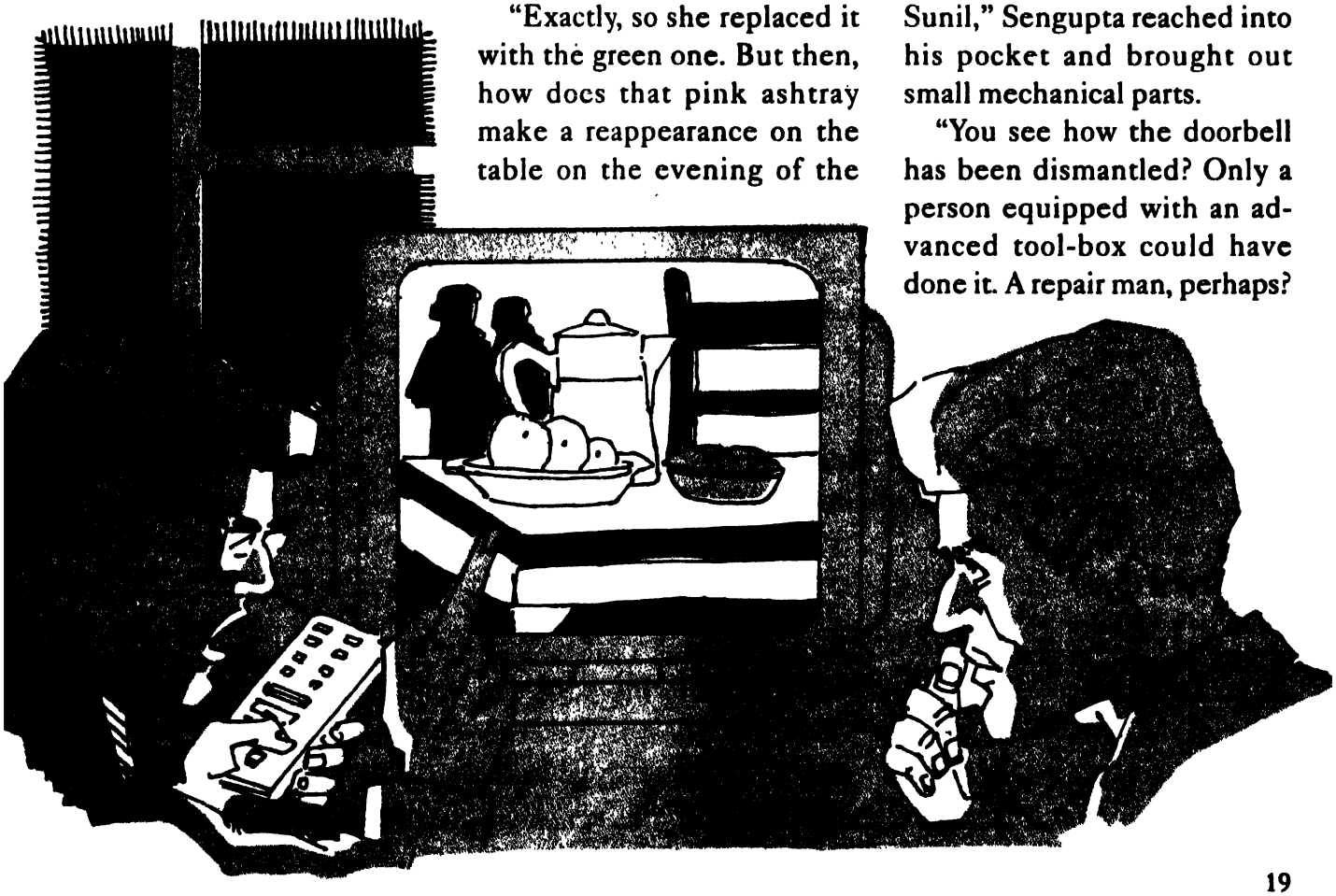
"My God, that is impossible!" Sunil's voice was filled with surprise.

Even Ghosh looked on with admiration, "You have a keen eye for detail, Mr. Sengupta."

"We have just concluded that Mr. Anil Bose was struck from behind. He was hit when seated in his chair. Had he been struck anywhere else in the room, there would be blood all over. But there weren't any stains.

"Yet, how could anyone have hidden behind Mr. Anil Bose without being seen by him? That leaves only one possibility—he knew someone was behind his chair. Remember that dismantled doorbell, Sunil," Sengupta reached into his pocket and brought out small mechanical parts.

"You see how the doorbell has been dismantled? Only a person equipped with an advanced tool-box could have done it. A repair man, perhaps?



But there was no visitor that evening! I've cross-checked Mr. Manohar's and Sudhir's statements. There is only one person in this house who is equipped with such a toolbox." Sengupta lit a cigarette, "The robot, Bunty."

Sunil's and Ghosh's faces showed complete shock.

Sengupta continued, "After Manohar left the room, Anil called Bunty over to repair some fault in the bell. Anil was a hot-headed person. He must have started abusing the robot for being slow. Bunty is very advanced and for the first time, perhaps, Anil's words made a dent in the robot's ego."

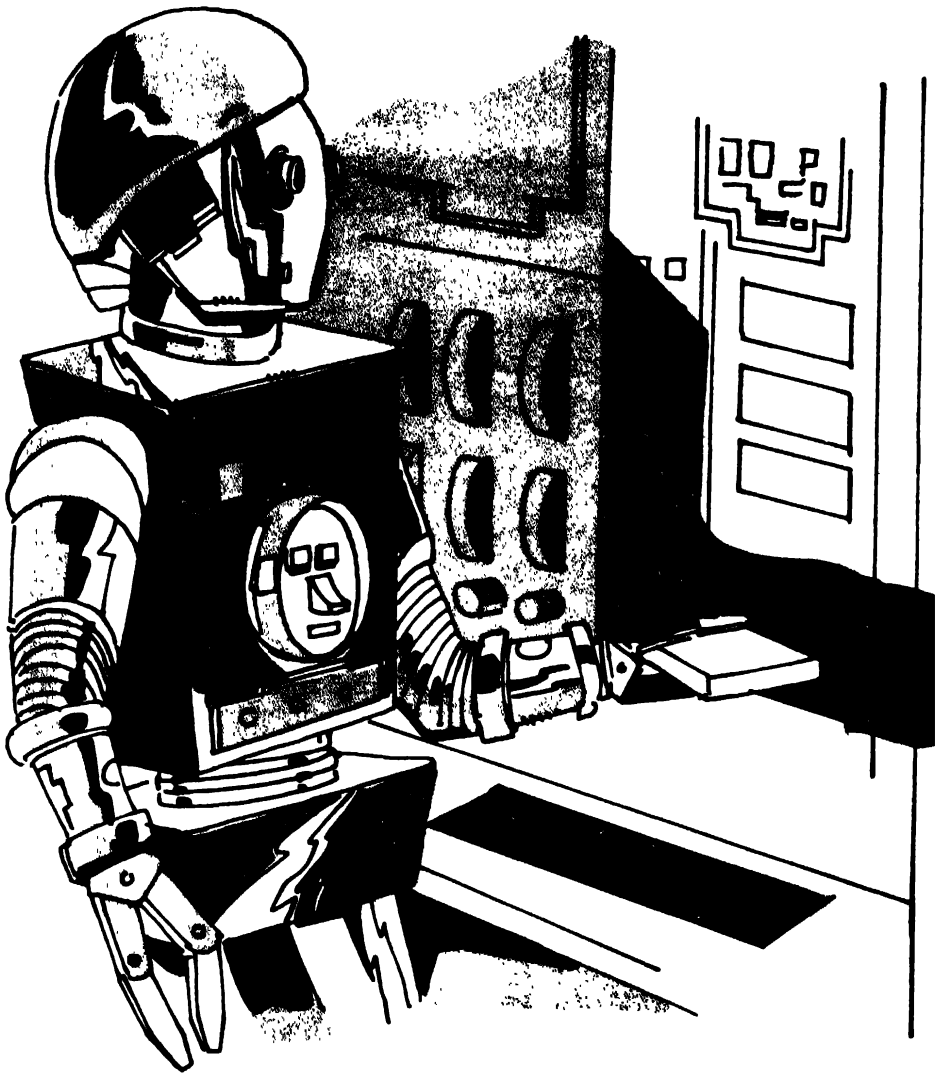
"The robot's ego?" Ghosh said in disbelief. "A machine with an ego?!"

"Yes," said Sengupta. "Scientists have been trying to create a 'personality' within machines; one which has several facets of a human mind. Bunty or Model X 4333 is the first generation of household robots equipped with a personality."

"But how do you know all this?" exclaimed Inspector Ghosh.

"I don't blame you, Inspector, it never appeared in any newspaper. I am a scientist and also happen to be Chief Security Officer at Magnum Computers Ltd. Sunil is an employee there.

"Once Bunty felt 'hurt', it retaliated. It must have had a heavy instrument in its hand.



A lethal blow was struck.

"Bunty may or may not have meant to strike so hard. But the sum and substance was that it realized Mr. Anil was dead. It had to cover up the crime."

Looking at Sunil, Sengupta queried, "You have an editing machine in the house?"

"Yes," Sunil's voice was quavering, "*Baba* used to make films for his lectures. The machine is kept in a small chamber adjoining his room. We keep all types of cassettes, including records of Bunty's movements there."

"Exactly," said Sengupta. "Bunty took one of his old cassettes and simply recorded that clipping of the dining-room onto this cassette. So it would appear he was in the dining-room all the time. But the robot overlooked something. It forgot that the ashtray on the dining-table had broken to bits some days previously."

But how can you eliminate the possibility of a burglar?" asked Ghosh.

"This house is equipped with a superb burglar alarm

system." It was Sunil who answered. "It would have gone off like a siren had anybody tried to enter."

"I later checked it; it was in perfect working order. No signs of tampering," Sengupta paused and added, "when you happen to examine the instruments in Bunty's tool-box, look for a heavy implement with blood stains, Inspector."

"So, I believe that settles it, Mr. Sengupta," Ghosh rose from his seat. "I shall send a special squad to take the robot into custody. I..."

The Inspector was never to complete his sentence. There was a curious noise. Sunil saw it first; he was the only person who sat facing the door. Bunty had entered and had heard everything. Things happened in an instant. Sunil half-rose from his chair and screamed, "It's the robot!"

The noise had been that of Bunty drawing its laser from its metal holster. Ghosh had his back to the door. While turning around, he began to draw his gun. Bunty's weapon spat fire. A luminous beam cut through the Inspector's chest. The robot turned its laser at Sunil. But it never managed to pull the trigger.

As Sunil watched, the robot's head erupted in a ball of fire. The machine teetered on its metal legs, making unintelligible noises and crashed to the floor. Sunil noticed Sengupta crouching on the floor, holding a laser gun.

The two men approached Bunty slowly. It lay near the door, its head a mass of hot, twisted metal. Cautiously, Sengupta turned the robot over and pressed a small button. "There's a chance the panel might still open."

For a few seconds nothing happened, then an opening appeared in the robot's side. An array of neatly arranged instruments was revealed. Sengupta pulled out a wrench and turned it over. A dark stain ran across its length.

Magnum Computers abandoned Project Omega, the building of robots with an electronic personality. No reasons were given. The general impression conveyed was that a major technical hurdle halted the research. Among the very few people who knew the truth were Sengupta and Sunil Bose.

Warm thoughts on a cold day

Hands curled around a mug of hot cocoa...
The smell of cake baking in the oven...
Feet tucked into your dog's fur...
Rich red flowers on a bed of dark green leaves...
The winter sun on your back...
Peanuts being roasted on a coal fire...
Huddling under the quilt...
Sizzling *parunthas* with melting butter...
A lingering hot water bath...
Steam rising from a bowl of soup...
Bonfires crackling in the backyard...
A bear hug...



I Remember



Alaka Shankar

TODAY, after almost four decades, when one reminisces about one's childhood, many memories come flashing back to one's mind—some sad, some funny, some wicked (pranks that led to more serious matters), some that seem foolish now but were so important then...

There is one incident that keeps coming back to me vividly and clearly. This is how the story goes.

We lived in a small town. My father and mother, myself aged seven and my two brothers, six and four. Ours was a beautiful little house on top of a hill. There were orchards of guava trees on one side and groves of mango trees on the other. Even the main street that took us the one mile long distance to our school gates was red.

I can still recall the smell of red mud and the clear, fresh air after the daily afternoon showers in a tropical climate. Afternoon was the time we returned home from school. Often we had to stand under a tree as the rain came pouring down.

My little brother would throw his school bag at me and run away into the rain, jumping into every puddle and soaking himself through. When we reached home, mother would be standing at the door with a towel. We would be stripped of our wet clothes and shoes, and rubbed down thoroughly before we entered the house.

But my kid brother always got into trouble. He wouldn't reach home on time, and though we tried to cover up for him, he was often punished.

Once, it was worse. The mango season was at its peak. We returned from school like every other day. My kid brother again did the disappearing act. He ran ahead of us while my brother and I lugged his school bag. And when we reached home, he had not reached. It wasn't even raining. Where could he be?

After an hour-long wait, mother's anger changed to worry and fear. We had heard many stories of children being kidnapped. I began crying. My brother was braver.

He ran through the mango orchards shouting out my brother's name. I ran behind him. And suddenly after some time, we heard answering calls.

"I am here! Help! I am stuck, help!" There was fear in the voice. As we neared the sound, we searched the direction it came from, and saw him high up on a branch. His trousers and shirt pockets were brimming with ripe, juicy mangoes.

We brought him down to safety. He was frightened and hungry. But his pranks were getting far too regular. Mother locked him up in a room. I couldn't bear to hear him cry. My brother brought a chair and I climbed up. We managed to throw him a rolled chapati with some pickle. He was grateful.

I cannot erase from my mind the memory of his tiny hands and his big eyes full of tears as he reached out to catch the food.

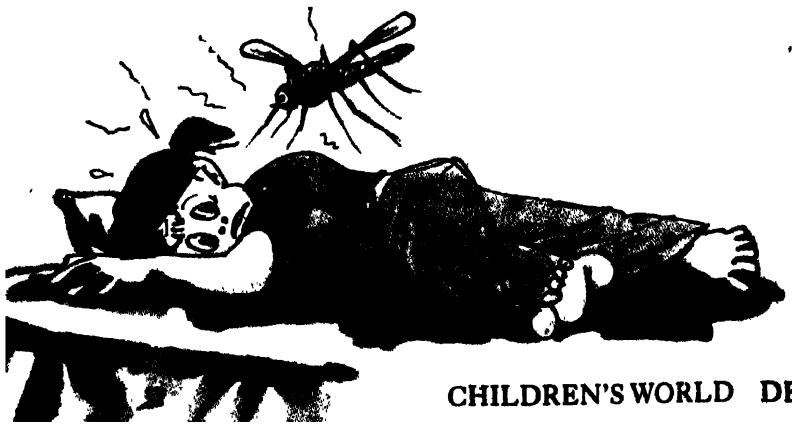
Today, after so many years, I wonder whether we did the right thing to help him every time he got into trouble...



Merin Elizabeth Kuruvilla (13)
Illustration: Prithvishwar Gayen

Who put the lizards in the maid's bed?
Who shot a zillion rubber bands at her head?
Who took her clothes when she was having a shower
And hid them inside the pillow cover?
My cousin, of course, who else would do
Such dirty tricks to the maid too.
He hates her because she never obeys him
(Though the chances of anyone doing that are pretty slim)
She makes him go to bed at nine, even if his parents are out
If he is making a call to his friend, she is forever hanging about.
So he pays her back with silly pranks
He appears to her a monster with fangs
He makes sure there are mosquitoes in her room at night
And sees her not snoring, but whopping with all her might,
At morn she gives him a chilling glare
My cousin shrugs his shoulders as if he is not there.
I don't care anyway, what should I do?
I am having my share of problems with her too!





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SHEIKH CHILLI the SILLY

SCRIPT: SUDHA SANJEEV
ILLUSTRATIONS: S. SUMAN














MISERABLE! THEY GET ONLY BONES TO CHEW. BUT, YOUR HUSBANDS PARENTS GET PULAO.
GIVE THEM THIS MONEY. LET THEM GET BETTER FOOD IN FUTURE.
THE ANGRY SHEIKH GALLOPED OFF IN SEARCH OF THE FAKIR-
IN THE EVENING...
I GAVE RS 500 TO THE FAKIR. HE WILL GIVE IT TO MY PARENTS WHO ARE STARVING.
SEEING THE SHEIKH THE FAKIR CLIMBED A TREE.
COME DOWN, YOU THIEF! GIVE ME BACK MY MONEY!
CATCH ME FIRST.
THE SHEIKH TOO CLIMBED THE TREE
THE FAKIR CLIMBED OUT ON A BRANCH, JUMPED ON THE SHEIKH'S HORSE AND RODE AWAY.
STOP RIGHT THERE!
BACK HOME-
WHERE IS YOUR HORSE?
SINCE MY PARENTS ARE LIVING IN STYLE IN HEAVEN I SENT IT TO THEM!

PANDA CLUB OF INDIA

Newsletter Vol. I No. 11

Dear friends,

A big 'hi' to all of you. Tell me, do you also feel the same way as I do? That this year, 1997, has really flown past us? Just a while ago, India entered her 50th year of independence... then Dussehra was followed by Diwali. Besides having fun at parties, I learnt a lot about India's heritage.

The year is ending now. It's time to make new resolutions for the new year. Lots of happiness to you, your family and friends. May you achieve your goals. It has been a year of events—some happy and some sad; this is the moment to reflect on them and accept realities—some positive and some grim. Can you let me know your thoughts on the above? I would like to share them with our other friends, and add my views to them. Do write in with what you would do and want done to change some of the problems our world is facing. On this serious note, I sign off.

With you, always,

Panda

Dear Panda,

I like watching all your shows, but Super Samurai Syber Squad, Defenders of the Earth and, of course, Dennis the Menace are simply my favourites.

I must tell you that there's always a fly in the soup. I have to attend my crash courses on Monday and Thursday and I miss three Panda Club shows. Sometimes I bunk these classes for the sake of the cartoons. Yet, I don't feel it's right. I hope you will telecast many more cartoons.

Gaurav Nath, Silchar, Assam

Prize-winners of Stic Color Contest

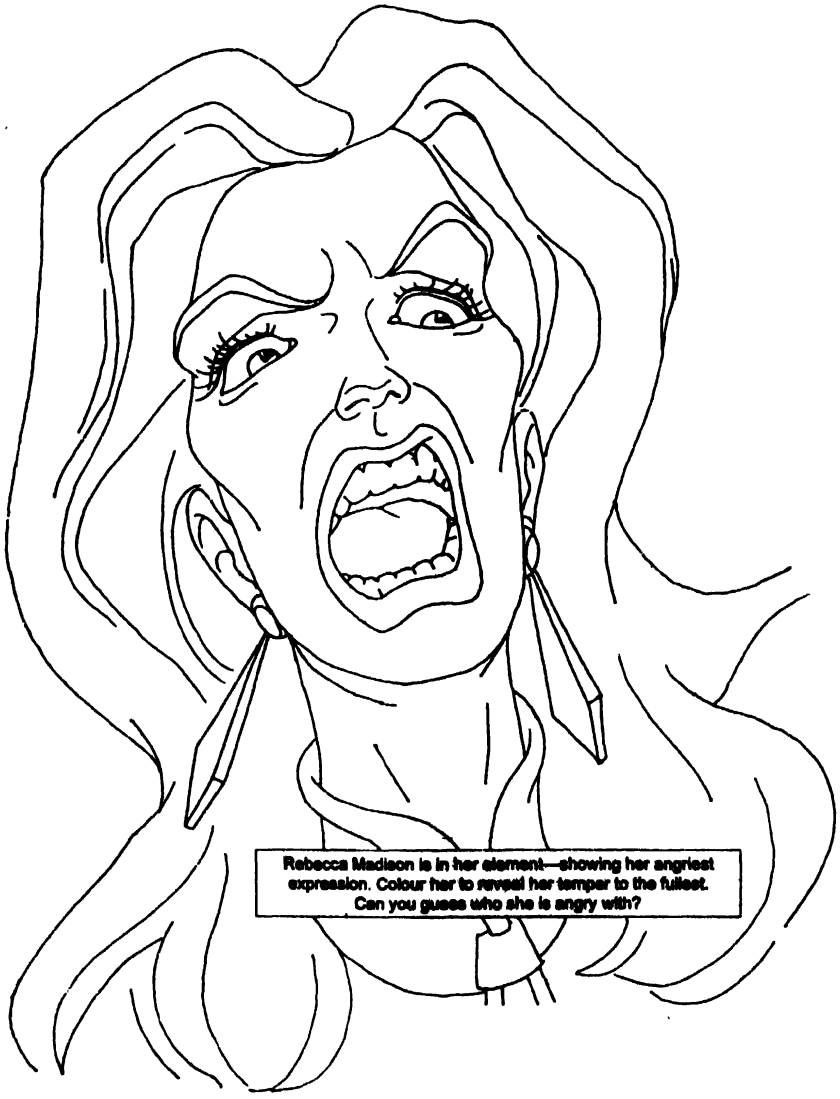
July 1997—***1st Prize:*** Surekha John James, *Sultanate of Oman* ***2nd Prize:*** Asweelah V M Kutty, *Trivandrum* ***3rd Prize:*** Antora Mitra, *Jamshedpur* ***Consolation Prizes:*** 1. Akshat Vasudev, *New Delhi* 2. N.Rakesh, *Chennai* 3. Aakriti Kapoor , *New Delhi* 4. Michelle S. Cota, *Goa* 5. Tinkle Modi, *Arunachal Pradesh*

August 1997—***1st Prize:*** Theresa J. Santacruz, *Karnataka* ***2nd Prize:*** Aditya Kumar Deshwal, *New Delhi* ***3rd Prize:*** Astha Jolly, *Haryana* ***Consolation Prizes:*** 1. Ajay Jonathan Jayraj, *Madurai* 2. Arvind Swaminathan, *Chennai* 3. Abhishek Gupta, *New Delhi* 4. R. Rajaguna, *New Delhi* 5. Praduymna Ray, *New Delhi*

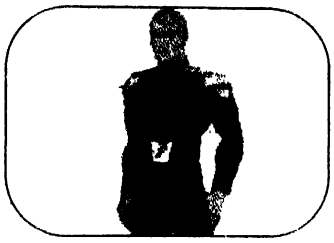
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FSE

Rebecca Madison



Following are the winners of LOCO POCO contest. Congratulations!
Ist prize: 1. Shivankoo Sharma, *Chandigarh* 2. Abhigna, *New Delhi* **2nd prize:** 1. Anupam Anand Mane, *Thane* 2. Utkarsh Srivastava, *Rewa* 3. Nijhika Gupta, *Delhi* **3rd Prize:** 1. S. Krishnan, *Cochin* 2. Vinod Ramachandran, *Mumbai* 3. Nilay A. Savla, *Mumbai* 4. Salil Vijay Lawande, *Goa* **Consolation Prizes:** 1. Deepasana Taneja, *New Delhi* 2. Nidhi Munjal, *New Delhi* 3. Prasad Menon, *Ghaziabad* 4. G.T. Jerome, *Trivandrum* 5. Aman D., *Indore* 6. Anirudh Gargi, *Haryana* 7. C.H. Raj Kumar, *Andhra Pradesh* 8. S.Tajinder Singh Sodhi, *Kashmir* 9. P.J.R. Chaitanya, *Madhya Pradesh* 10. T. Venu Gopal, *New Delhi* 11. Rakesh S. Nair, *Mumbai* 12. Priyanka Kumar, *New Delhi* 13. Anurag Ramachandra, *Trivandrum* 14. Gursharan Singh, *New Delhi* 15. Abhinav Kumar, *New Delhi* 16. Bhavana Ahuja, *New Delhi* 17. Nitesh Bhatia, *Ajmer* 18. Anita Ann Jose, *Bangalore* 19. Vikrant Gandotra, *J& K* 20. Vinod Kumar, *New Delhi*



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Tuesday 5.30 P.M. on DD II—RIMBA'S ISLAND : Six lively, lovable, colourful costumed animal characters who dwell deep in the idyllic rain forest, share their joys and learn from one another catchy songs and simple stories--(dubbed in Hindi)



Thursday 5.00 P.M. on DD II—SUPERHUMAN SAMURAI SYBER SQUAD : Sam Collins, a video game champion and leader of a teenage garage band, fights an alien warlord 'Kilokahn' who has infected the digital world with monster "megaviruses."

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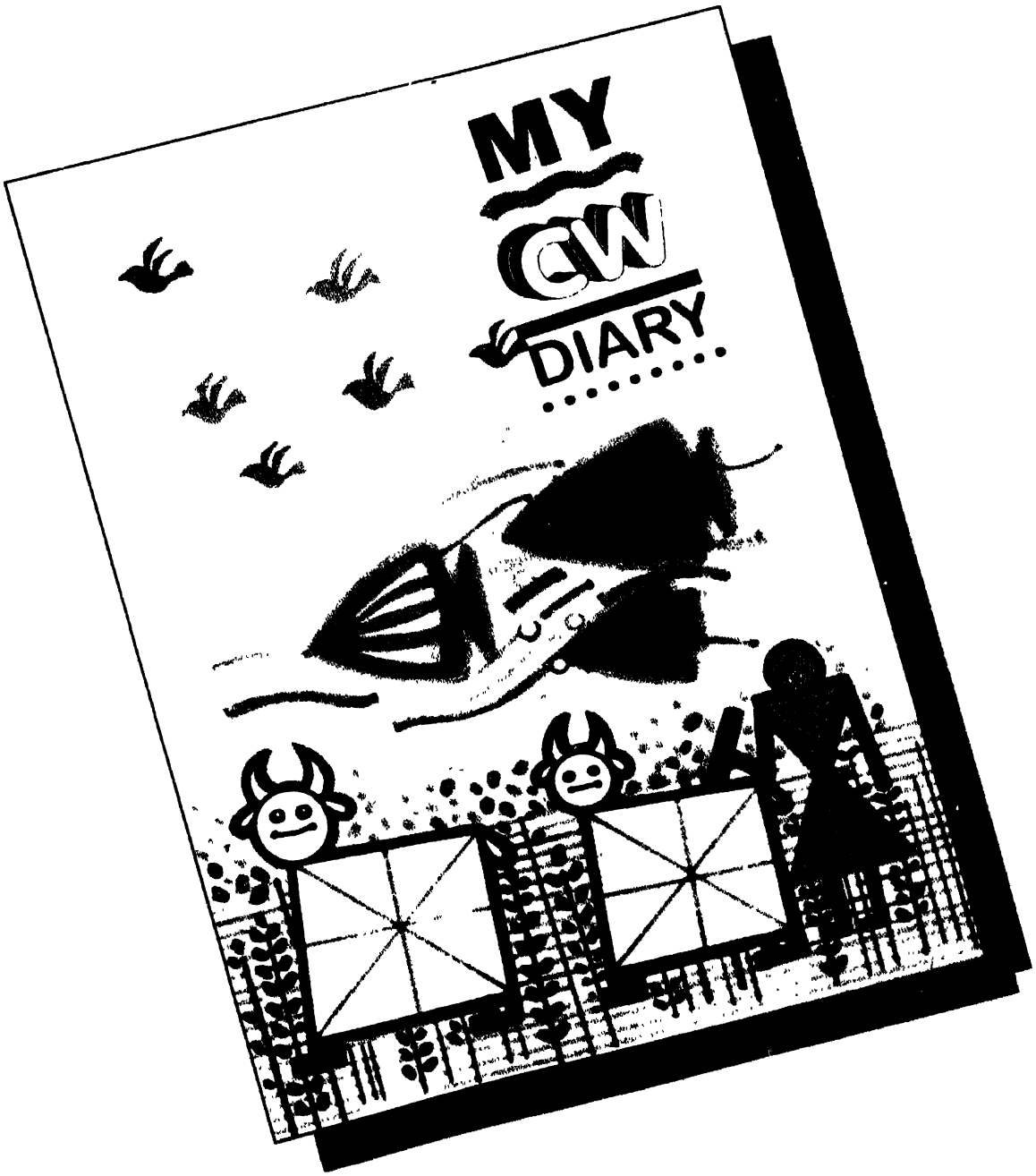
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(For subscription details see page 24)

Christmas Flowers

Text : Peter Smetacek
CEE-NFS

Illustrations : Beejee

WITH Christmas around the corner, Poinsettias or Christmas flowers are beginning to bloom. These vermilion flower heads make a brilliant splash in gardens and parks.

Originally from Central America, this plant is common over most of India and is found upto an elevation of 2,000 metres in the Himalayas. Its habit of flowering during winter, between November and March, caused it to be associated with Christmas.

The flowers are clustered in the centre and are greenish yellow with vermilion stamens. These are quite inconspicuous from a distance. What are visible are the large flower bracts which do the duty of petals. These are usually vermilion, but pink and creamy white flower heads are not uncommon at all.

If left alone, the plant grows a woody stem from which a



spray of flower stalks arise. The bush grows to a height of four metres. After flowering, the leaves are shed and the plant passes the summer months in a dormant state without leaves or flowers. Since this looks rather scraggy, many gardeners prefer to prune down the plant each year after flowering, and let the new shoots arise from almost ground level. Naturally, the plant cannot grow to its usual height and fewer flowers are produced.

In India, this plant is propagated by cuttings put down during the rainy season. Although the plant flowers profusely, seeds are usually not produced. This is because the plant was brought over from Central America but its pollinating partner, probably an insect, was not. The Night Jessamine or Lady of the Night (*cestrum nocturnum*) is another example of this, for it, too, does not produce seeds in India.



Flowers of Poinsettia attract many insects, particularly butterflies and wasps. Although the butterflies which are attracted spend a long time on these flowers and evidently suck up a lot of nectar, they do not manage to pollinate the flowers. This is not unusual, for many plants attract a variety of insects but are pollinated by only one group or, sometimes, a single insect species. If that particular species does not visit the flower, it will remain unpollinated, despite all the attention it receives from other insects.

Poinsettias belong to the spurge family. This is a large family of plants with such well-known members as the Amla tree and the castor oil plant. Poinsettias are referred to as *Euphorbia pulcherrima*, whether the flower bracts are vermilion, pink or creamy white. The genus Euphorbia is distinguished, among other features, by the milky sap in the stem. If a flower or leaf is plucked, this sticky sap oozes out. Many species of Euphorbia occur in India, most of them indigenous.

One species, *Euphorbia stracheyi* is found up to an elevation of 4,700 metres in the Himalayas.

Of all the spurges, though, there is no doubt that the Poinsettia is the most strikingly colourful. Few plants can match the size of the flower heads or their brilliance.



THE DRESS CODE!



Story : Sukhendu Dutta Illustrations : Beejee

The scene : A banquet hall
The time : Late evening
The occasion : A dinner in honour of a scholar.

THE ELITE of Calcutta, both Indians and Europeans, had arrived to take part in the banquet. The men were elegantly attired in evening suits.

A short man with bright eyes, wearing a *dhoti*, *chaddar* and slippers, came to the gate of the banquet hall. He was almost bald, except for a few limp strands of hair, which he had combed on the sides of his head.

He was about to enter the hall, but was stopped by the gateman.

"What's wrong?" asked the man, in surprise.

The grim-faced, tall, turbaned gateman looked him up and down. He fingered his moustache and said he could not enter the banquet hall as he was not dressed for the party.

"But everybody there knows me!" he said.

The gateman twisted the two ends of his moustache. "Rules state that only gentlemen in dinner suits are to be allowed into the premises," he declared.

"I've no dinner suit to wear," said the bald man, in a



soft voice. "They won't mind, I assure you!"

The gateman's stern face hardened. He twisted his thick moustache into sharper points and said, "I'm sorry!"

The man was amused. "Never mind!" he said, a mysterious smile lighting up his face. "I'll go and dress for the party."

Away he went. The gateman laughed. The man looked so funny without a hat on his glistening, bald head!

The man returned after a short while. Yes, he was now well-dressed, complete in a dinner suit—trousers, shirt, coat and shoes!

All the guests had already arrived for the reception. But where was the honourable scholar? The host and the chief guest were now waiting at the gate to receive him.

Everyone was pleased to see our bald man.

He was escorted to the reception hall with great respect. The banquet was in *his* honour. The gateman could not believe his eyes. He stood still, shocked. The man went into the hall with a faint smile on his lips.

At the end of the speeches in the banquet hall, the host rose. "If you please, sir," he said, "shall we have our dinner?"

The guests did not need a second invitation with such mouth watering delicacies spread on the tables.

They did not know what a dreadful surprise awaited them!



Suddenly the host jumped to his feet. Our honourable scholar was pouring the choicest food into his coat-pockets!



"Good God!" Everybody was taken aback. Mouths fell open at this strange behaviour.

"Excuse me, sir?" The host looked at him in wide-eyed bewilderment.

"I was turned away from the dinner party," our scholar shifted in his chair with an expansive smile, "and was allowed to enter the hall because of my coat and trousers. So the coat deserves the food! Doesn't it?" His voice was sarcastic.

The bewildered guests did not know what to do. There were profound apologies by the host, "I...I'm sorry, sir!"

"So am I!" replied our scholar.

What a horrid end to a lovely party! The embarrassed guests left the hall one by one.

The gateman was still there. The shine in his eyes had now faded, his moustache drooped in shame. He looked at the scholar and folded his hands, "You did not mind, sir, did you?"

"You're not at fault!" The scholar smiled at him kindly.

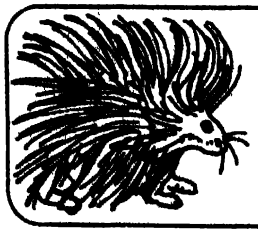
* * *

The great scholar was none other than Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar!

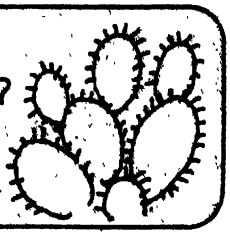
A scholar of unbounded genius, he is regarded as the Father of Bengali prose. He was given the title 'Vidyasagar' in recognition of his profound scholarship in Hindu law. He was the Principal of the Sanskrit College, a prestigious institution for higher education. Admission to this college was open to the 'upper' caste students. It was Vidyasagar, who opened the doors of this college to all.

He also championed the cause of women's liberation and founded thirty-five schools for girls. He had to fight long and hard with the conservatives of Bengal to bring about these reforms.

Iswar Chandra's role in the eradication of illiteracy, in spreading education and bringing about social reforms is gratefully remembered by all of India and especially the people of Bengal even after a hundred years of his death.



What did the young porcupine say to the cactus?
"Is that you, Daddy?"



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The treasure of Kumbher

A CBT PUBLICATION

Story : Krishna Narayan
Illustrations :
Nilabho Dhar Chowdhury

Taking refuge in Raja Balwant Singh's great-aunt's room, Prithviraj and Chandravati discover the treasure of Kumbher. So do Ismail Beg and Senor Noronha. Prithviraj is deputed to arrange for transporting the treasure, when a cry from Chandravati saves him from being knifed by Abdel Khan. Senor Noronha, too, is attacked by Abdel Khan, who in turn is killed by Kunwar Singh. A fight ensues between Ismail Beg and Kunwar Singh. When the latter falls, Ismail Beg rides off with Prithviraj in pursuit.



Part 15

KUNWAR SINGH'S troops were giving battle to Ismail Beg's guards who had joined the fray. The courtyard was filled with men and animals thrashing around, fighting for dear life. Clouds of dust spewed up to the skies. The cries of the wounded and the clash of metal upon metal rent the air.

Soon Ismail Beg's army was worsted; without any leadership they either fell to the blade or took to their heels. When the last man surrendered, a deathly silence descended on the courtyard which now resembled a battlefield. Here a horse scrambled

back onto its feet and limped away, there a soldier spouted blood and died.

Chandravati shook herself out of her trance and ran up to Kunwar Singh. He lay on the ground, covered with dust and gore, his breath coming feebly, his eyeballs rolling towards the heavens. Chandravati knelt beside him. Kunwar Singh's eyes focused on her.

"I am dying," he said.

"No, don't say such things," said Chandravati in alarm.

"It is what I deserve," said Kunwar Singh. "I have betrayed Kumbher. I bartered away my honour and plotted with thieves against my own king. I pray to God to forgive me for my misdeeds."

His eyes closed, and he appeared to be asleep. Chandravati took his head in her lap. Was this the same man in whose company she had spent so many delightful hours of her childhood?

Kunwar Singh's eyes fluttered open. "Raja Balwant Singh is here in Kumbher. He is now at my residence, waiting for news from me. I have failed him at this moment of death, even as I have in life." His head fell back.

Chandravati was shocked. Her father was here! A shadow fell over her and she looked up. It was Senor Noronha. Gone was his customary poise and hauteur. His immaculate uniform was crumpled and torn. His hair was dishevelled. He was barely able to disguise his pain. Abdel Khan's attack had injured him badly.

"I have lost, Princess," he said formally. "I gambled for great gains, and failed."

Chandravati looked steadily at him. "That is as it should be, Senor," she said. "You have betrayed us and Madhoji Sindhia, too. Instead of coming to our rescue, you joined hands with Ismail Beg in destroying us. You say you have lost—I say you do not even deserve to be alive." Her voice was neither triumphant nor scornful. "Go back to where you came from, Senor Noronha. We have seen the likes of you before. Men like you have no sense of right and wrong. Gold and silver are your gods. Go away, and look elsewhere. Leave Kumbher alone, at least now."

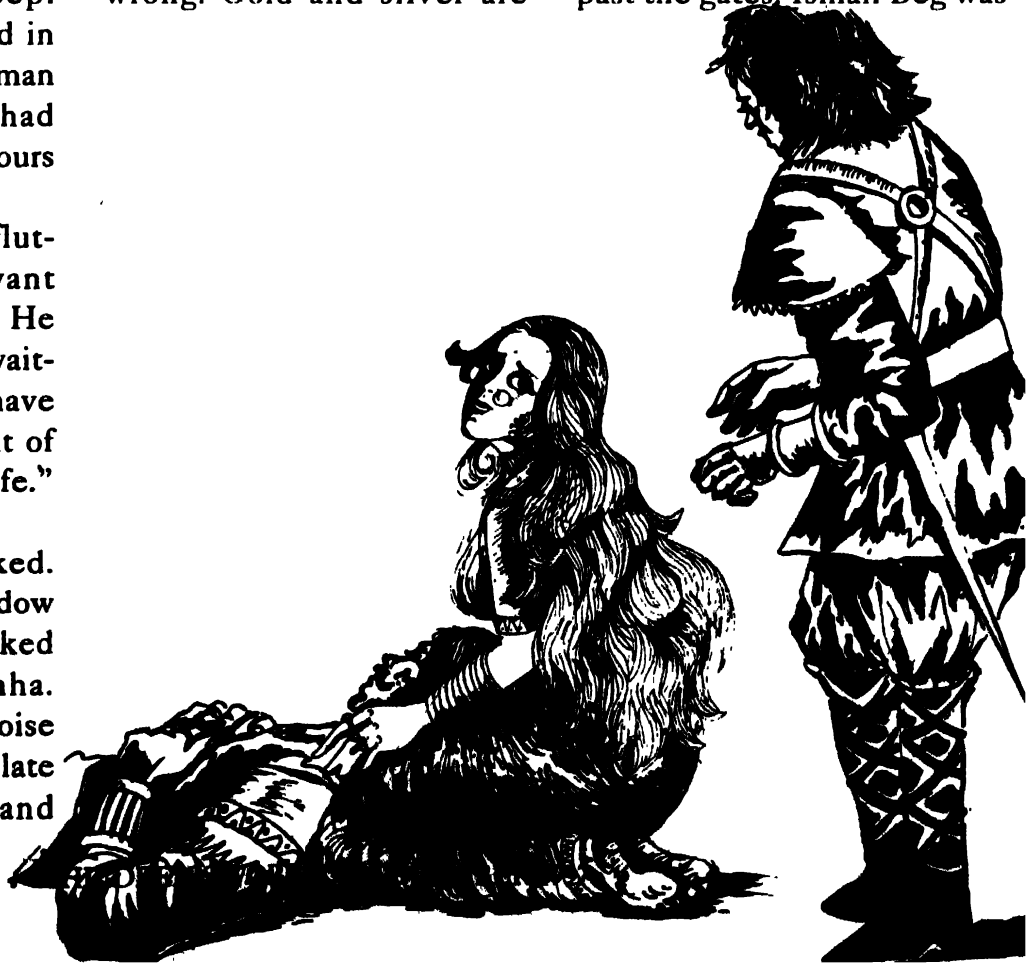
Senor Noronha opened his mouth to speak, then thought the better of it. He turned and limped away.

Chandravati watched him pick his way slowly past the writhing bodies and the strewn weapons. What a different turn events would have taken had he stood by Kumbher! But greed had blinded his better judgement, as it had blinded Kunwar Singh and Janki Devi.

Chandravati rose. She threw a last look around her, then walked towards Janki Devi's residence to meet her father.

*

The two horses flew along the streets of Kumbher and past the gates. Ismail Beg was



crouched low on his mount, his feet kicking viciously into its underbelly, urging it to greater speed. Prithviraj followed hot on his heels. The wind rushed past him peeling his eyelids back from the eyes. Blood coursed like fire through his veins and pounded at his temples. He could see nothing before him but the retreating figure of Ismail Beg. At last he would settle scores with the man whose evil genius had brought death and destruction all around him.

Slowly but surely, Prithviraj caught up with Ismail Beg, who glanced back and whipped his horse harder. The hoofs thundered across the plain, shaking the very earth beneath. Once again the gap closed between the two men and Prithviraj was abreast. Ismail Beg whirled and brought his whip down on Prithviraj's shoulders. He reared at the lash. Ismail Beg struck again, but this time Prithviraj reacted by getting a hold on the whip and tugging it free of Ismail Beg's grip, simultaneously pulling his horse away. Ismail Beg's body came up with a jerk. His foot caught in the stirrup. He fell sideways and clung to the bridle for dear life while the horse plunged on in headlong flight. Then, when the strain threatened to rip his arms off their sockets, Ismail Beg let go and rolled over and over on the ground.

Prithviraj stopped and wheeled his steed back to meet his adversary. He dismounted and drew his sword. Ismail Beg, his face red with exertion, turned to face him.

The two men crouched and circled each other, blades gleaming in the sun. Only the bushes and the naked sky were witness to this clash between good and evil.

Prithviraj made the first move. He lunged forward. Ismail Beg parried with ease and countered with a thrust which would have run through Prithviraj's stomach had he not dodged in time. Their swords again met with a clang as both men closed in on each other. Prithviraj swung his blade and slashed Ismail Beg on his right arm. A poppy-red patch appeared on Ismail Beg's dress, growing bigger every second as the blood seeped through from the wound.

Ismail Beg clutched his arm with his left hand and continued the duel. He advanced with a twisting motion of his sword, warding off Prithviraj's attack and putting him on the defensive. He knew he was losing blood and would have to make a breakthrough if he was to win. Prithviraj lost his footing on the rubble beneath his feet. Ismail Beg lunged, and again Prithviraj escaped the thrust by a whisker. The two men fought grimly. Their breath came in gasps. Their arms screamed in protest as the weapons grew heavy and unwieldy in their hands.

With the last reserves of strength at his command, Prithviraj flung himself at his opponent. Ismail Beg's sword fell to the ground with a



clatter. He swayed drunkenly on his feet, tired yet defiant.

"So you will take my life," he said, panting. "You fought well. You deserve to win."

Prithviraj raised aloft his sword. Ismail Beg did not flinch. He awaited death with the same disdain that had characterized his life.

Prithviraj lowered his arm. He could not bring himself to kill an unarmed man in cold blood. The fact that his opponent would have no hesitation in doing so, had the roles been reversed, made no difference. Quite simply, he was not a butcher. He gestured Ismail Beg towards his horse.

"I spare your life," he said panting. "You may go. But do not ever show your face again in these parts, for I shall not be so generous the next time."

Ismail Beg did not reply. He staggered to his mount and pulled himself into the saddle. Slowly he rode away. Leaning on his sword, Prithviraj watched him till he was a speck in the horizon. Then, mounting his own horse, he made for Kumbher.

*

The war of Kumbher was over. Peace descended at last on the wounded city. With the passage of time the citizens put behind them the dark memories of Ismail Beg's pillage, and set to work to rebuild their property and the economy. Once again the city began to prosper and take its rightful place in history.



Raja Balwant Singh declined to ascend the throne. He had lost the stomach for kingship and its attendant tensions. The crown was a burden that he longed to surrender, and the war of Kumbher gave him the opportunity to do so. After a long meeting with Chandravati and his commanders, Raja Balwant Singh agreed to guide the new king for a while.

Senor Noronha recovered soon from his wounds. His lust for money and power continued unabated. His *jagir* expanded into a small State and grew bigger still. With the passage of time his reputation as a master tactician and a successful general overcame the mistrust that Madhoji Sindhia harboured against him. He emerged as Madhoji Sindhia's right hand man in future campaigns. However, he was later struck down with a mysterious ailment that paralysed his right side. Senor Noronha died in his spacious mansion at Salcete in Goa, at the comparatively young age of forty-eight.

Madhoji Sindhia's life consisted of an unending series of skirmishes, battles, wars and struggles for supremacy. At one stage he was virtually the ruler of the fading Mughal empire, when he liberated the emperor Shah Alam from various aggressors, including the British. But such were the ever-changing situations and loyalties of the times that the great Madhoji Sindhia himself was faced with extinction.

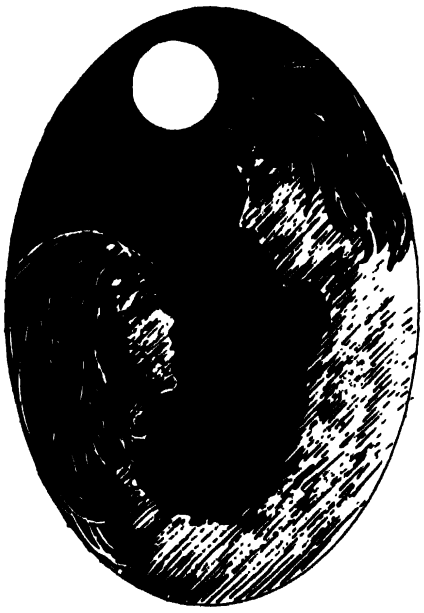
As for Ismail Beg, he went on for several more years to inflict upon his hapless victims the special brand of cruelty for which he was notorious. His

fortunes continued to rise and fall, as he scoured central and northern India, trying to find a treasure to match the one that had slipped through his hands. Along the way he teamed up with another unscrupulous marauder, Ghulam Qadir, and was emboldened enough to raid and ransack the emperor's palace and the mansions of the Mughal nobles, and even tried to strip the gold leaf off the dome of the Jama Masjid.

Ismail Beg, however, met the end he deserved when he was confronted by Madhoji Sindhia's army off Agra. The Maratha infantry approached from the front with heavy musketry fire, even as the Maratha cavalry moved in from the sides and cut off Ismail Beg's rearguard. He tried to rally his men for what would have been a suicide charge but was forced by his wife to escape. The escape route lay across the river Yamuna, swollen by floods. Ismail Beg's wife was drowned. He was caught, tortured and finally put to death.

What of the main characters of this story, Prithviraj Chandola, the commoner, and Chandravati, the princess? Prithviraj returned victorious to Kumbher after his duel with Ismail Beg. By and by, he mustered courage to propose marriage to Chandravati, and was overjoyed when she accepted. Departing from tradition, Prithviraj was crowned King of Kumbher. He donned the mantle with grace and ruled wisely and well, thus giving lie to the belief that the ability to rule rests only with those of royal blood. Chandravati bore him many sons, and stood by him both in times of success and adversity.

Prithviraj and Senor Noronha were suddenly equals, but Prithviraj did not



forget that he owed the Senor his life. He invited him to Kumbher, played the gracious host, and gifted him with two chests of gold and precious stones when he left.

Prithviraj's mentor, Shaubat Khan, was brought to Kumbher and looked after till he died.

Duler Singh was not allowed to go back to Kolari. He spent his last days in Kumbher.

Raja Prithviraj Chandola died honourably on the battlefield. Chandravati, instead of following him into the funeral pyre as was the custom, took over the reins of the State till her eldest born grew of age.

Jai Singh's health did not recover from the damage done during his imprisonment. He lived the rest of his life a cripple, to the anguish of Raja Balwant Singh and Chandravati. He was treated with utmost respect by Prithviraj till the end of his days. Thus was lost to Kumbher one of its brightest sons.

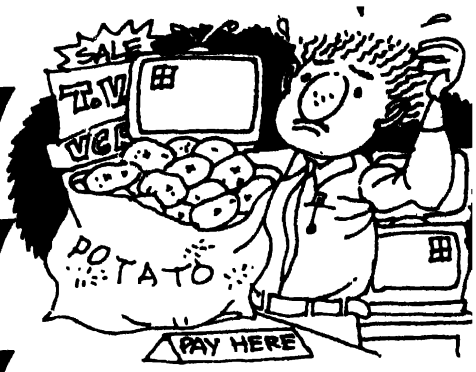
Janki Devi was released from the dungeons. She returned to her residence, broken in heart and broken in fortune. The death of her son snuffed out her desire to live. She remained confined to her room. It is said that she went mad slowly, and spent her last days chained to her cot, raving and frothing at the mouth.

As for the emperor Shah Alam, during whose reign the war of Kumbher was fought, nothing more need be said except that he presided over the humiliating collapse of the mightiest empire of all times. The descendant of the great Akbar and the victorious Aurangzeb was reduced to a blind beggar, an object of pity and ridicule. By the year 1800, the reins of power had passed on into the hands of Arthur Wellesley and the British, where it would remain for a hundred and fifty years.

Concluded

SMALLEST
LARGEST
TALLEST

Money Money Money



Illustrations : Subir Roy

MONEY makes life easier. Without money we cannot live in today's world. Whether it is to buy anything—from a loaf of bread to gold and silver—we need it. A few centuries ago, gold and silver were used to buy things. Before that, people used a lot of other things, like animal hide, cloth, salt, beads, shells and cattle as forms of currency. All this was possible because someone had the bright idea of inventing currency.

But what did they do before a common currency was invented? Well, they just bartered things. A baker exchanged his loaves for other things he needed, a farmer exchanged his produce for the things he needed like clothes or farm equipment, and so on. Just imagine the things you would have to barter if there were no money today. You may perhaps have to swap a floppy disc for a cone of ice cream or a pair of sneakers for a fancy T-shirt or some such necessity. Thank God for money!

Here are some facts about money:



• The **first minted coins** are believed to have been made in the **5th century** B.C. in Lydia. This ancient city is in present day Turkey. It was made of **Electrum**, a natural compound of gold and silver, and was in the shape of a bean. It had a stamped design to make it official currency.

• About the same time, Indians had started using coins too. These were ingots of silver stamped with three dots. Another form of coins was bent bars of silver with various devices stamped with a punch on one side.

• But long before Lydians, the Chinese used another form of currency. By the year **1100** B.C. they were using **miniature tools** like the spade, plough and hoe as money to buy things.

• The **first die-cast coins** appeared in India in the **4th century** B.C. in Taxila, Kausambhi and Mathura. These were stamped only on one side, and the various designs used for stamping were the Bodhi tree, the Swastika and the lion. These coins were square.

• Did you know that at one time **fish-hooks** were used as a form of currency? Called **Larins**, these were widely used by traders on the Indian Ocean route in the seventeenth century.

• **Cowrie shells** were used as money in several countries of Africa, Asia and Australia till as recently as the **18th century**. And to think that today, they are used merely for ornamentation, especially of garments. In India they were first



used in Bengal in the 14th century.

• **Paper money** was first used by the **Chinese** in the **6th century A.D.** and it used to be printed on bark paper. In India the **first legal tender paper currency** was printed in **1861.** Notes of denominations of Rs. 10, 20, 50, 100, 500, 1000 and 10,000 were issued.

• Canadians used **Playing Cards** as money during the French colonial period. This could be called a form of paper currency. Introduced by the Canadian Governor in **1685** to overcome money shortage, each playing card was marked a certain value and signed by him. Playing card money was in circulation for over 79 years in Canada.

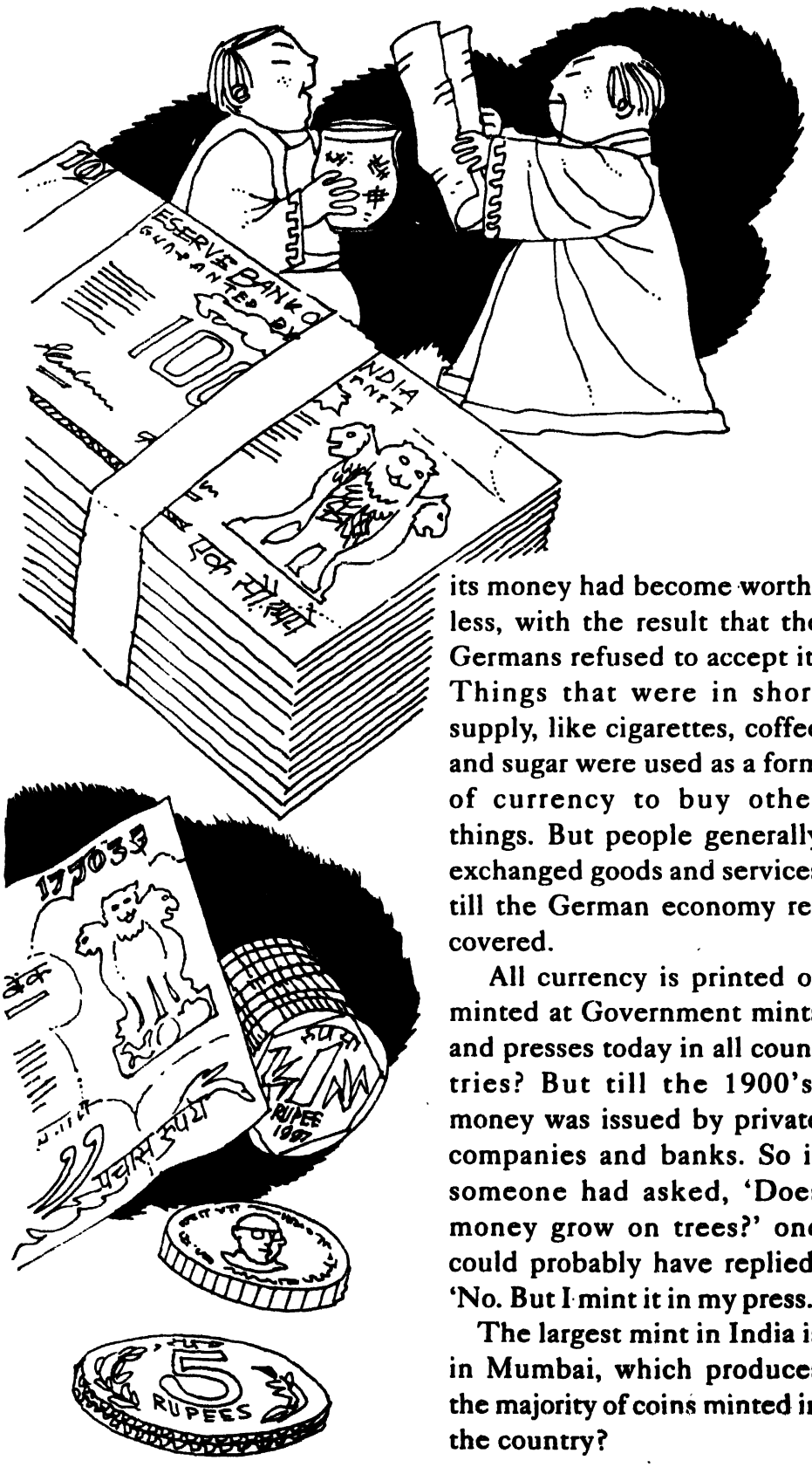
• The **largest gold coin** was issued by **Shah Jahan** in **1654.** The coin measured 13.7 cm in diameter and weighed over 70 ounces. Its denomination was 200 *mohurs.*

• During modern times, the **largest coin** minted was the **Rs. 100 coin in 1980.** It weighed 35 gms and had a diameter of 44 mm. It was a collector's item and not meant for circulation.

• The **last gold coin** was issued in **1948** by Mir Usman Ali Khan of Hyderabad.

Did you know that

Germany had briefly gone back to the barter system after World War II? The German economy was in shambles and its money had become worthless, with the result that the Germans refused to accept it. Things that were in short supply, like cigarettes, coffee and sugar were used as a form of currency to buy other things. But people generally exchanged goods and services till the German economy recovered.



All currency is printed or minted at Government mints and presses today in all countries? But till the 1900's, money was issued by private companies and banks. So if someone had asked, 'Does money grow on trees?' one could probably have replied, 'No. But I mint it in my press.'

The largest mint in India is in Mumbai, which produces the majority of coins minted in the country?

Compiled by Thangamani

COLOR CONTEST

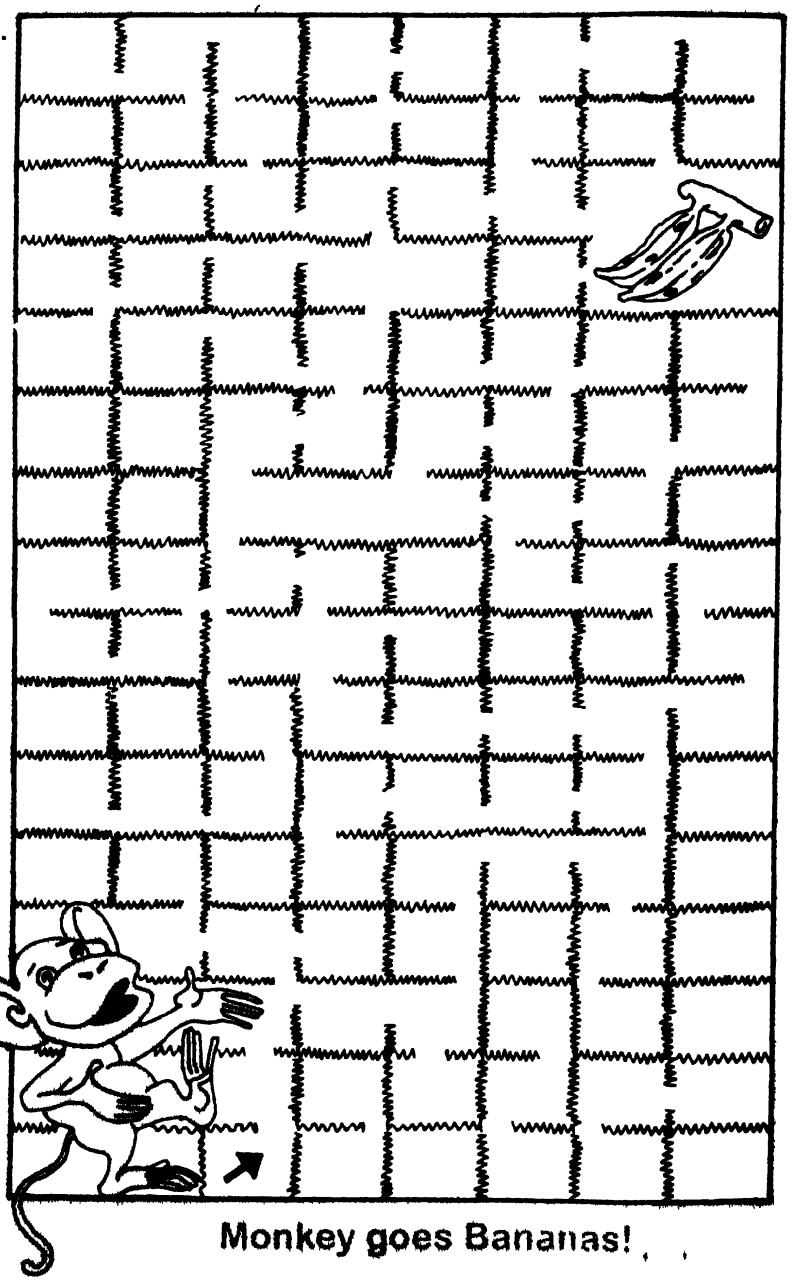


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FUNTIME





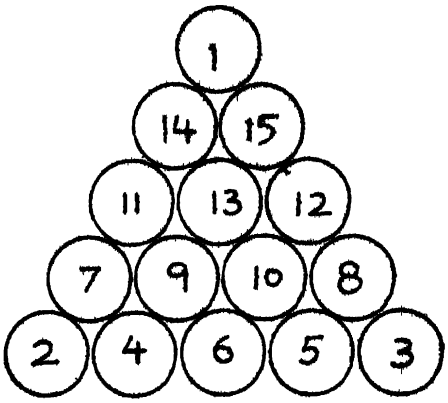


Monkey goes Bananas!

Nattu is so hungry that he can't think straight. Help him get to the tempting yellow bananas.

ODD BALL

Each ball in the pyramid has a pair which adds up to 16. Which ball is the odd one out?



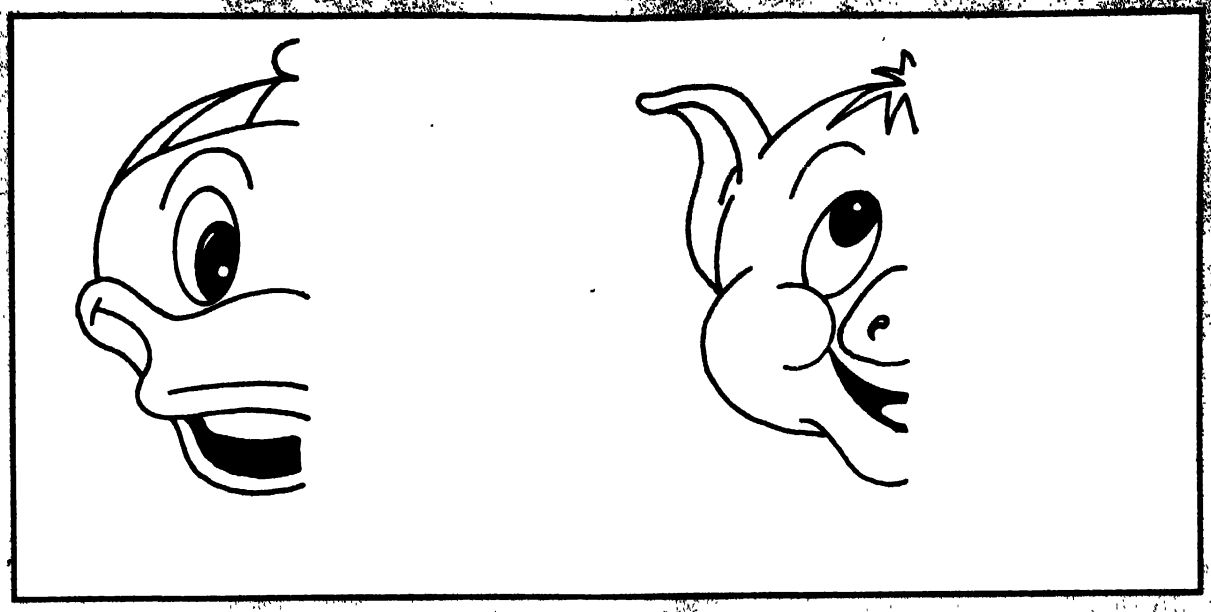
Criticizing
an egg
is a lot easier
than
laying one.

Try, Try Again!

Can you write the figure 8 and make a circle ○ with your foot at the same time?

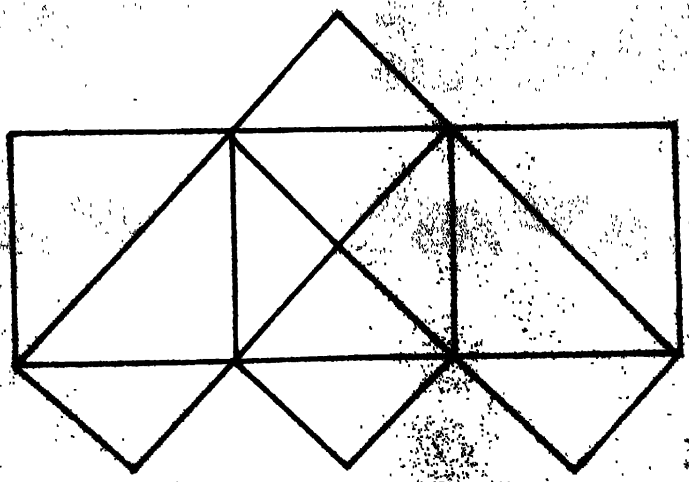
Oops! Where's my missing half?

Complete the other half of them pairs and colour them.



A MIND FOR DESIGN

Can you draw the following design without lifting your pencil even once?



Link A Word

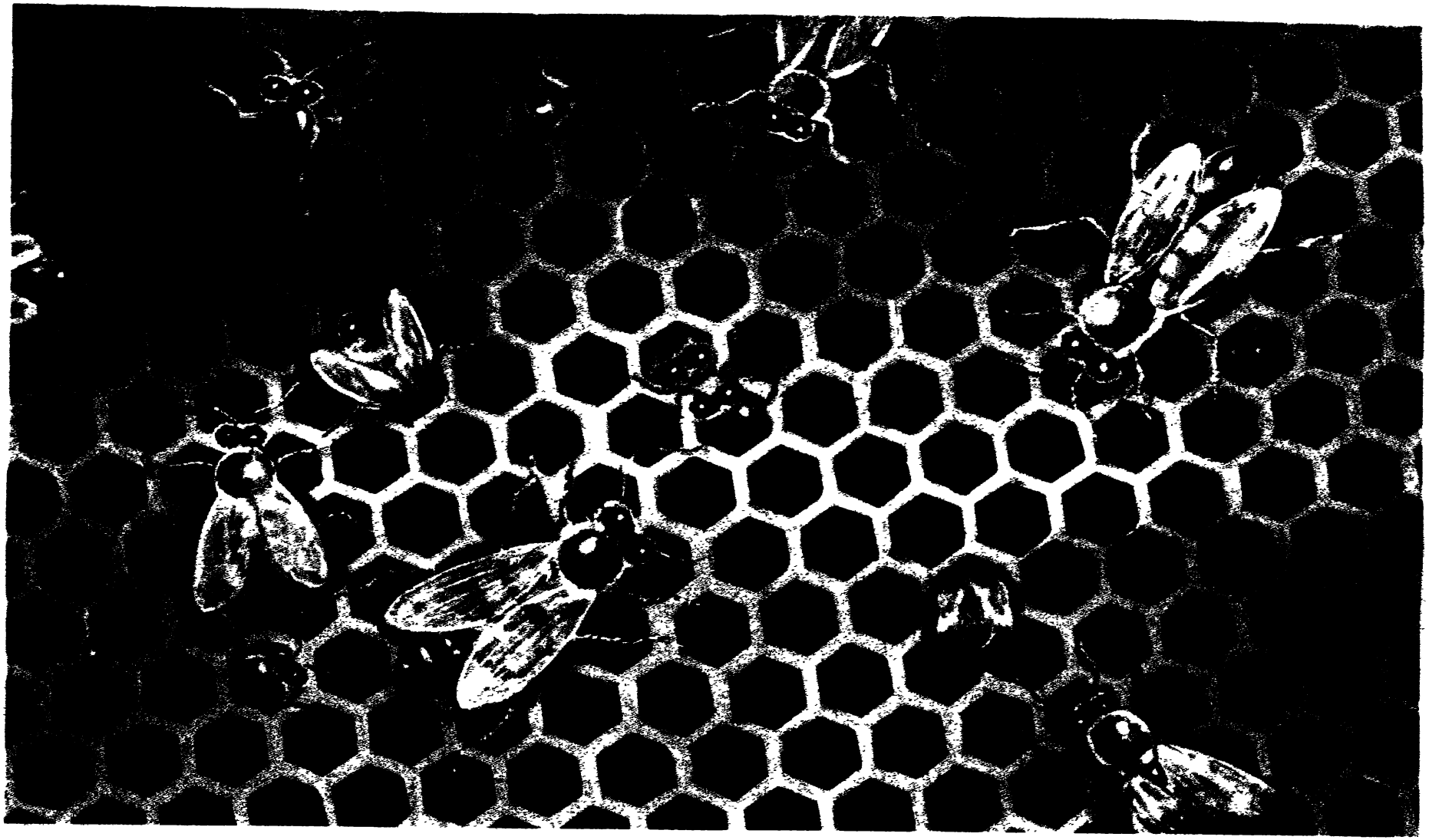
Think of a fourth word related to all three words listed below.

Example: frying pan saucepan

surprise _

foot _ _ _ _ snow _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

cream _ _ _ _ _ _ blue _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _



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Answers to Bingo! (October 1997)

1. 1979 **2.** John Bunyan **3.** Steven Kapoor **4.** Dayanand Saraswati **5.** Sir Arthur Conan Doyle **6.** The inscribed value of a stamp **7.** Spice Islands of the East Indies **8.** Pigeon **9.** Kauai (one of the Hawaiian Islands) **10.** Sir George Everest, the Surveyor-General of India **11.** New Zealand **12.** Giant Rafflesia **13.** A pod **14.** Hydrogen **15.** The Tuatara—a reptile that looks like a lizard **16.** Caviare **17.** George Eliot **18.** Hungary **19.** South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation **20.** German Measles

Answers to Funtime

ODD BALL

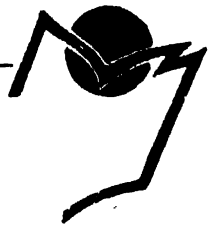
Ball **8** is the ODD one!

A MIND BOGGLER



LINK A WORD

Party
Ball
Cheese



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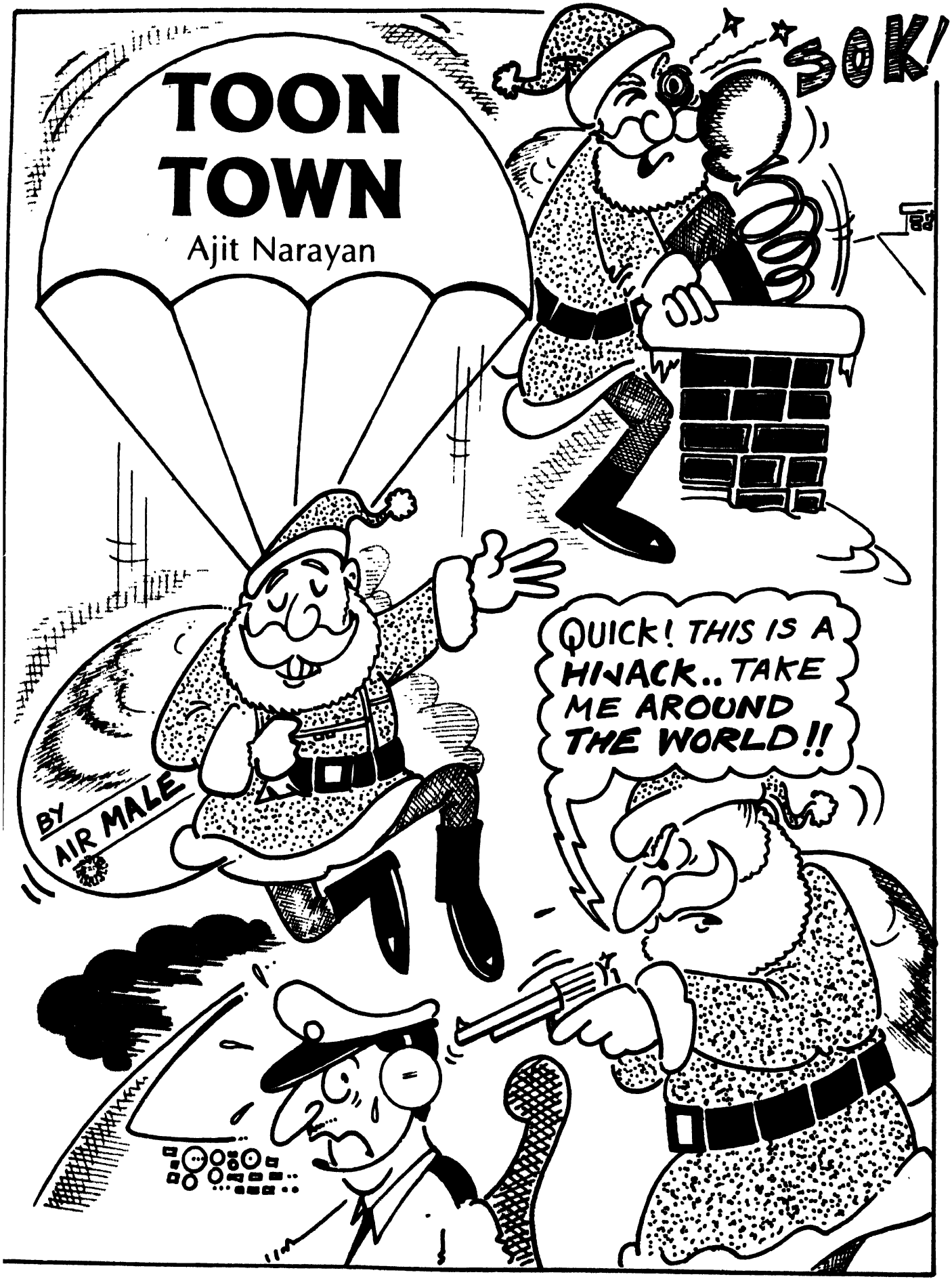
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SOK!
QUICK! THIS IS A HIJACK.. TAKE ME AROUND THE WORLD!!
BY AIR MALE


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GREETINGS
REPORT CARD
SEASONS GREETINGS
U.S AIR
MARS
METRO LIGHTING CO.



a Christmas bonus

Story : Cheryl Rao Illustrations: Prithvishwar Gayen

"BUT, RITA, the family won't be complete without you!"

Her mother's voice was faint over the wires and Rita swallowed a lump in her throat.

"I know, Ma," she said. "I was looking forward to being with all of you. But Sneha has nobody here to look after her and I can't just pack up and leave! You wouldn't want me to be that kind of friend, would you?"

"No, no, I wouldn't," replied her mother. "You're right, my girl. Stay with Sneha. She needs you."

"Merry Christmas to all of you, Ma," whispered Rita with a catch in her voice.

"And to you too, baby," said her mother.

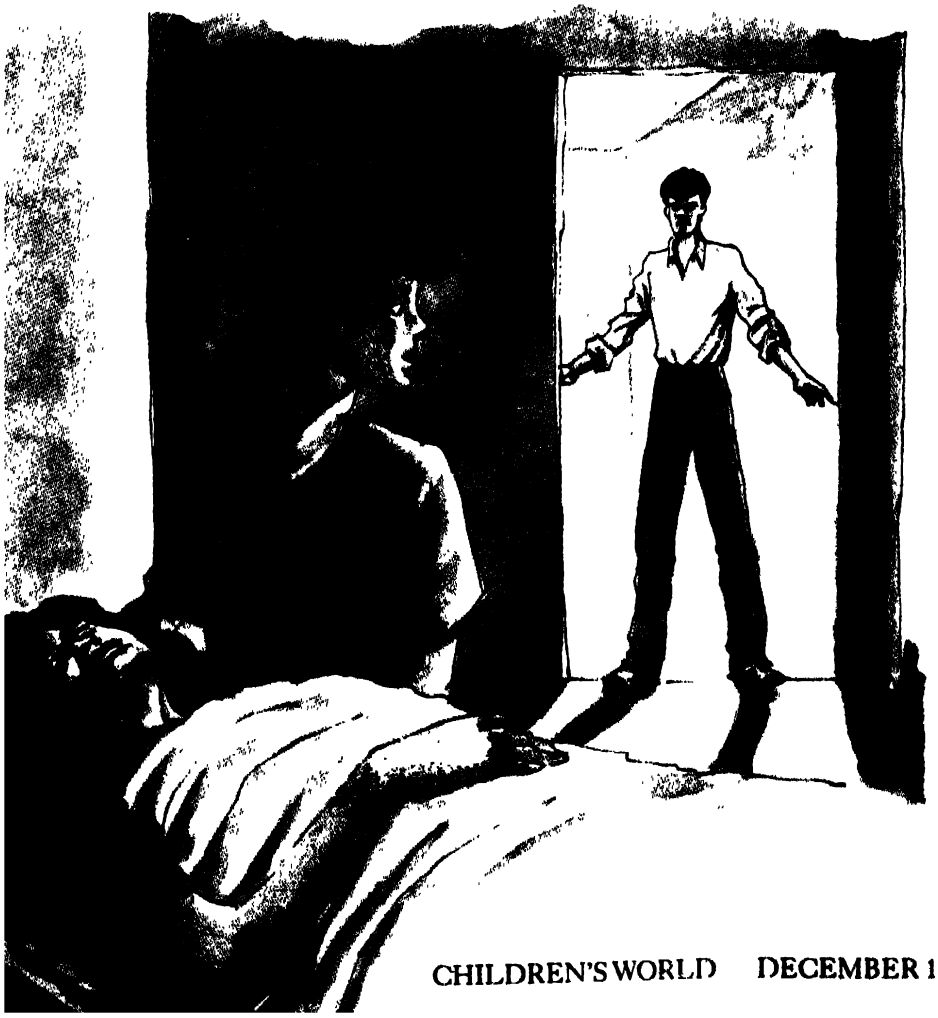
Tears were streaming down Rita's cheeks. She was seventeen years old and this would be her first Christmas away from home. Quickly she pulled out a handkerchief and wiped her face dry. She turned and walked back into the hospital and met a friendly nurse coming out of Sneha's room. "Don't worry," she said, as she saw Rita's sad face. "Your friend will be fine in a few days."

Rita nodded and attempted a smile. She peeped in at Sneha. Her room-mate had her eyes closed and she looked wan and drained out.

What a fright Sneha had given her! She'd been unwell for a couple of days, but both Sneha and Rita had been too wrapped up in their preparations for their trip to Pune to worry about it. "Just a tummy ache," they had said dismissively, planning what they would do as soon as they reached Rita's home. Sneha's parents were in Dubai and her elder brother was on a ship somewhere in the Indian Ocean. She had nowhere to go during the Christmas vacation and Rita had convinced her to accompany her to Pune to spend the festive season with her family.

"We'll have great fun," Rita had promised. "We'll go carol singing from the 22nd itself, though the rest of our choir has probably started on their rounds already. On Christmas Eve we'll go for the midnight service in the Cathedral. It is so beautiful — so, so exalting! You'll love it. And after that, the parties will start. There'll be dances and house parties and bonfires. Oh Sneha, we'll have a great time!"

And Sneha had doubled over with pain. Rita had stared at her, thinking that she was putting on an act; then, seeing her face twisted with pain, she'd realized that something was terribly wrong and she'd rushed out to call the Warden. Between them, they'd managed to get Sneha to the hospital — luckily it was only a few blocks away — and she'd been diagnosed as having acute appendicitis. "We'll operate first thing in the morning," the doctors had said, and Rita had tried desperately to contact Sneha's parents and tell them.



Now she sat down beside the bed with a sigh. Sneha had fallen asleep. The operation had been performed and she was still in a daze after the anaesthesia and the drug. Quietly, Rita picked up a magazine and flipped through the pages. Christmas was everywhere — recipes for Christmas sweets... Christmas shopping... where to hunt for things... a do-it-yourself Christmas tree... and here she was, on Christmas Eve, looking at the stark green walls of a hospital room!

A stab of resentment passed through her. Then she caught sight of her friend's face. Quickly she rose from her seat and put her hand on Sneha's. 'Christmas is all about loving,' she thought, 'then why must I nurse selfish thoughts and think of the fun I am missing. Suppose I were in Sneha's place—all alone, with no one to take care of me or to be with me? Wouldn't I want my friend by my side? Wouldn't Sneha do this for me, unhesitatingly?'

The door flew open behind her and she swung around

with a frown. A tall, wild-looking man stood in the doorway. Two strides and he was at Sneha's bedside holding her hand.

"Wait a minute!" protested Rita. "Are you one of the doctors here?"

The young man, quite handsome, looked across at Rita. "And who may YOU be?" he asked coolly, as if he hadn't heard her question.

"It doesn't matter who I am," replied Rita, coming forward and standing belligerently before him. "I belong here! And if you don't tell me what your business is, I'll have Sister here in a jiffy!"

Her voice had risen and Sneha opened her eyes. She looked at the two figures beside her bed, then smiled weakly. "*Bhaiya*! I knew you'd be here soon!" she exclaimed.

'So this is Vikram!' thought Rita, thankful that she had not pushed him out of the room. She stepped back as the young man sat down on the bed and smiled at his sister.

"All I have to do is turn my back and you land yourself in hospital!" he said teasingly

Quietly, Rita left the room, giving the brother and sister a chance to be alone together. She sat on the bench outside, immersed in her thoughts. As the youngest of three sisters, she wondered if she would be missed tomorrow at the family lunch. Nomita and Evita



would be there with their children. There would be noise and laughter, singing and games.

She could see all of them in her mind's eye—tearing open their gifts, the little ones stuffing themselves with Christmas sweets and falling asleep over the meal. She sniffed—and started as she heard a sound beside her. Vikram was seated on the bench next to her.

"How can our family ever thank you for being with Sneha?" he said, softly. "You can't know how much this means to us—to me..." He broke off. Rita looked at him, unable to say anything. Vikram looked away awkwardly. "Let's go back inside," he said gruffly. "You don't have to leave us alone. We have no secrets from you."

He got up and waited for Rita. She preceded him into Sneha's room, unsure whether she should stay the night or go back to the hostel. Sneha's words decided that for her. "*Bhaiya* arrived only this evening," she whispered to Rita. "He has barely had time to change before he rushed here. Tell him that the nurses, the doctors and you are looking after me well and he could go home and rest."

How typical of Sneha! Al-

ways worried about the other person.

Vikram left after a while and Sneha fell asleep, but Rita was awake for a long time. Despite the noises of the Mumbai traffic she thought she heard voices raised in song. When she woke up, the hospital bustle had begun.

"Merry Christmas!" said Sneha, looking almost like her normal, healthy self.

"Same to you," laughed Rita, as she jumped out of the narrow cot and ran to wash.

"*Bhaiya* said he'd come early," Sneha told her. "You'd better go off to church. I'm feeling much better. In fact, you can even go home to Pune and be in time for dinner. You must be so disappointed to be missing out on all the fun."

"Not half as disappointed as I am about not taking you home with me," replied Rita, dressing quickly and rushing to attend the church service.

On her return, when she stepped into Sneha's hospital room, everything looked so different. There was an artificial Christmas tree near the window and a cascade of plastic holly falling over the edge of Sneha's bed. There were two vases with poinsettia blooms and the room seemed to be dotted with parcels wrapped in gaily-coloured paper.

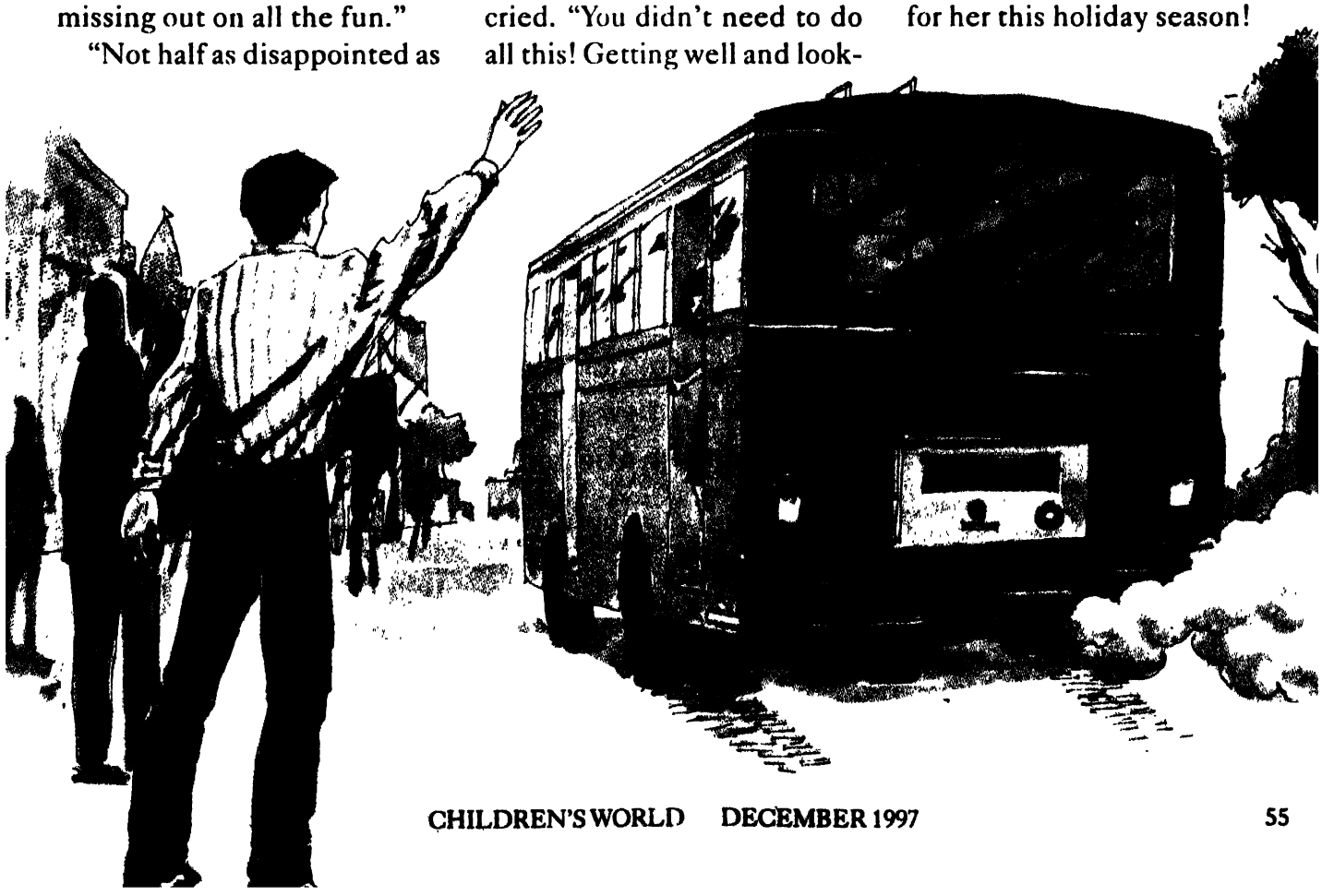
"Merry Christmas," cried two voices in unison and Rita stared at the brother's and sister's wide smiles.

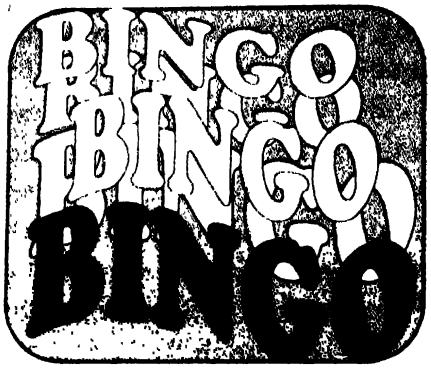
"Come and open your gifts from Santa," invited Sneha.

"I'm overwhelmed," Rita cried. "You didn't need to do all this! Getting well and looking the way you do now is gift enough for me!"

But it seemed that there was more to come. Vikram pressed a piece of paper into her hand and said, "Come along with me. I'm dropping you to the bus stand. You'll be home for a late-late lunch."

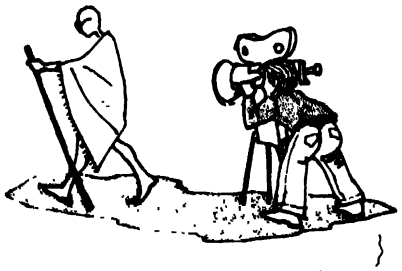
Before Rita knew what was happening, she was on a bus to Pune. All through the journey, instead of anticipating her family's surprised welcome, she thought of Vikram's warm smile and the pressure of his hand as he said goodbye to her. "If you don't return soon, I 'll bring Sneha there," he had called as the bus pulled out, and Rita knew that whichever way it turned out, she had something very special in store for her this holiday season!





Here's a quiz to perk you up. Send in your entries and if your answers are correct, you may win one of our two prizes—of Rs. 100/- each. Each entry must be accompanied by your subscription number or with a cheque for a year's subscription. Children upto 16 years may participate. Include your name, age, address and the name of your school. Last date for receiving entries: *January 1, 1998*. You could also fax your entries to us at 11-3721090.

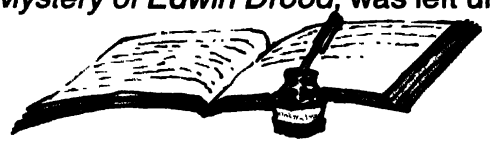
By Mudita Luthra

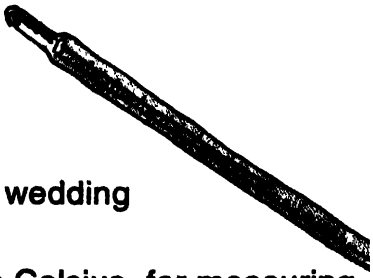




1. Who directed the film 'The Making of a Mahatma'?
2. Which is the thickest snake?
3. Which fish swims in an upright position?
4. Where and when was the first stamp used?
5. What do geologists call the molten rock inside the Earth?
6. What is the general name for foods such as spaghetti and macaroni?
7. To which game did the Gloucestershire home of the Dukes of Beaufort give its name?
8. What rock is formed when limestone or dolomite is subjected to great heat and pressure?
9. Who was the 'Wizard of Menlo Park'?
10. Which French palace is famous for its Hall of Mirrors?
11. Which German State did the British rule for 123 years?
12. In Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Book*, what is the name of the tiger?
13. What was the name of O'Henry's first book of short stories published in 1904?
14. A famous mystery novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, was left unfinished by its author. Name its writer.
15. Which day is celebrated as
    i) World Aids Day
    ii) Human Rights Day
16. Which country is known as the 'Land of thousand lakes'?
17. Where is the headquarters of the Reuters News Agency?
18. What is the gift traditionally associated with a person's fifteenth wedding anniversary?
19. What is the international unit, equal in magnitude to the degree Celsius, for measuring thermodynamic temperature?
20. Who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1979?







CW Bonanza! At the end of twelve issues, there will be a Special Bumper Prize drawn by lot from among the 24 winners of the year. So come on, folks! Get cracking!

Congratulations Nandita Menon, Calcutta! Winner of Bingo, October 1997.

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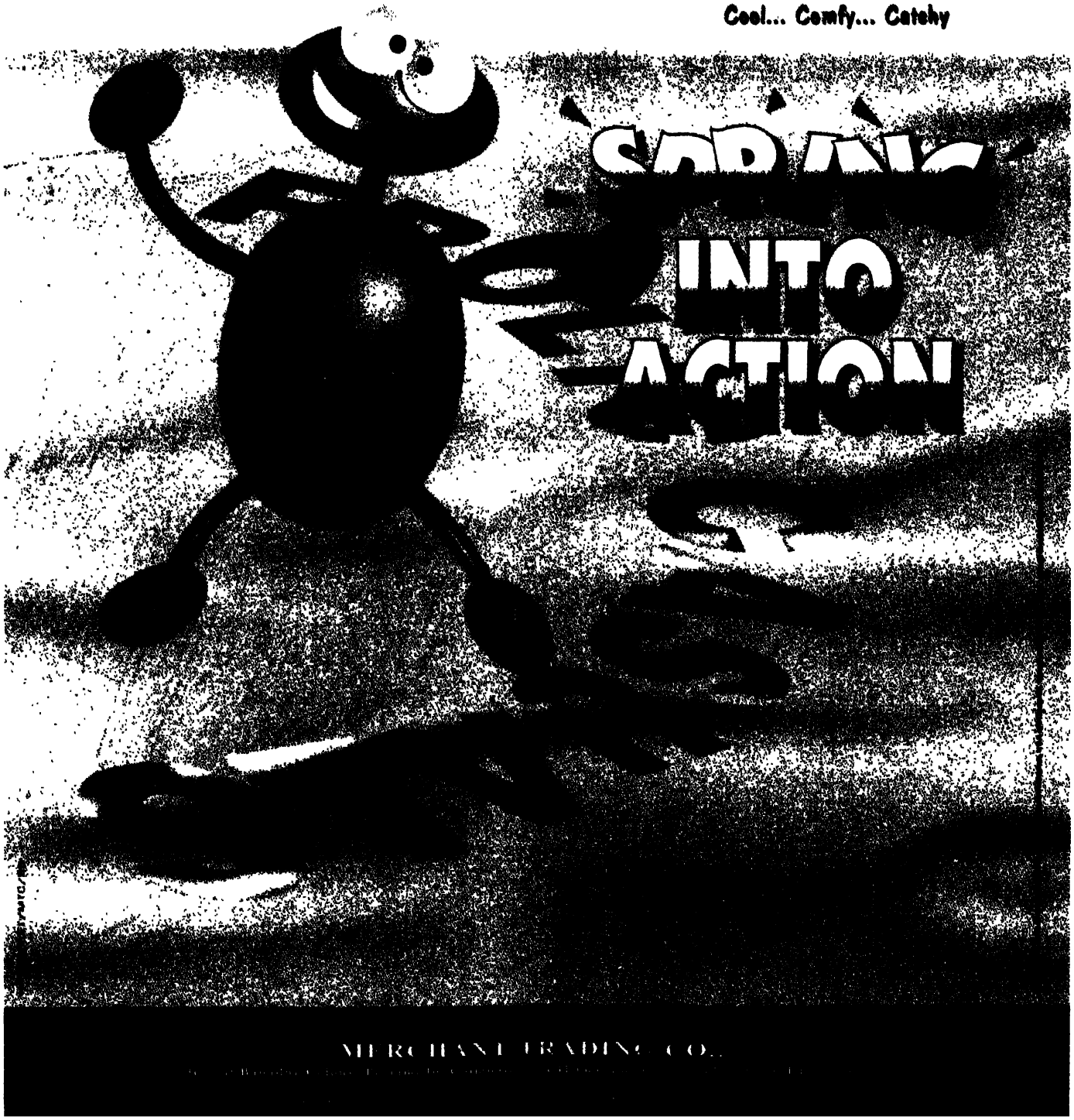


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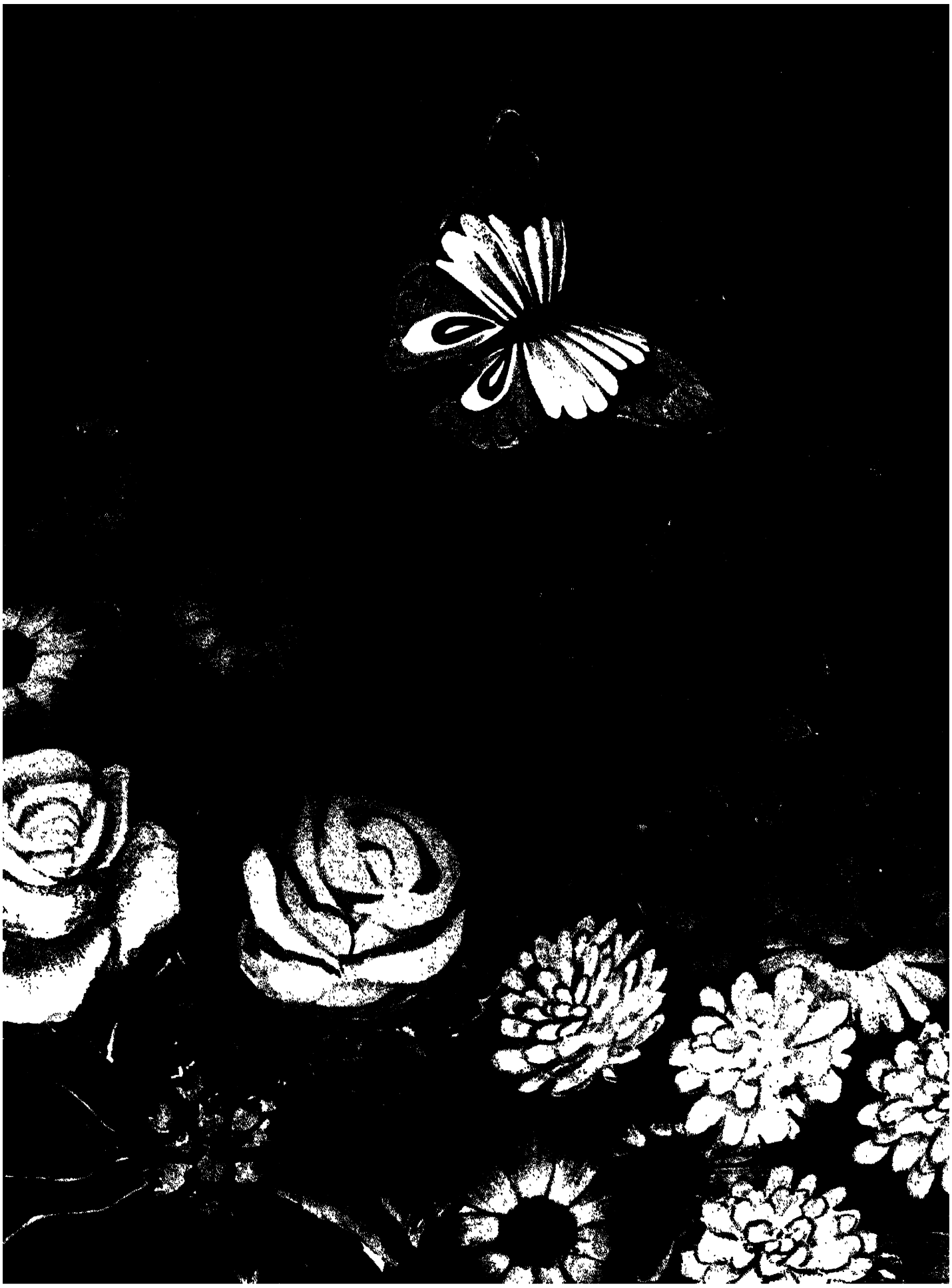


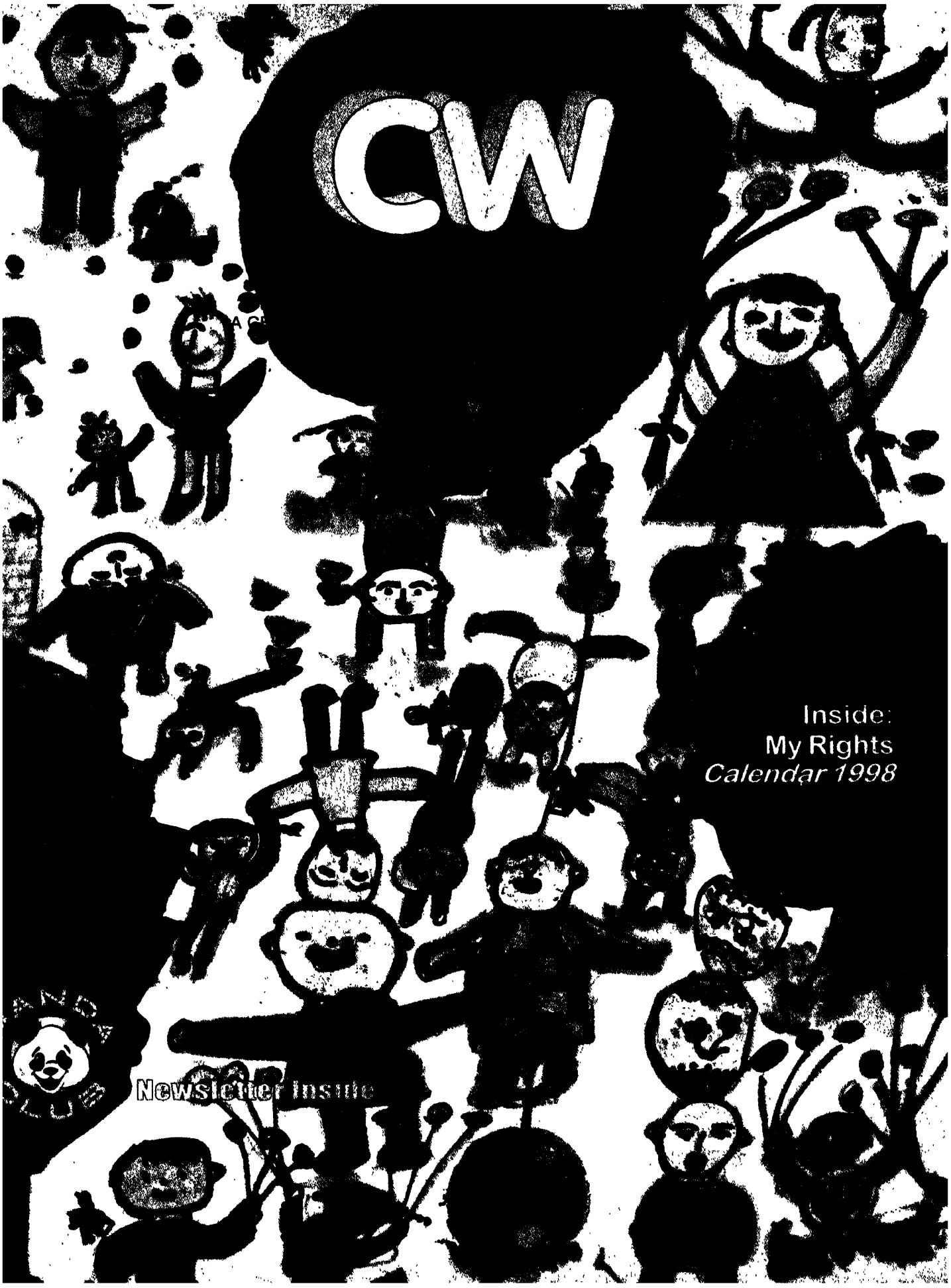
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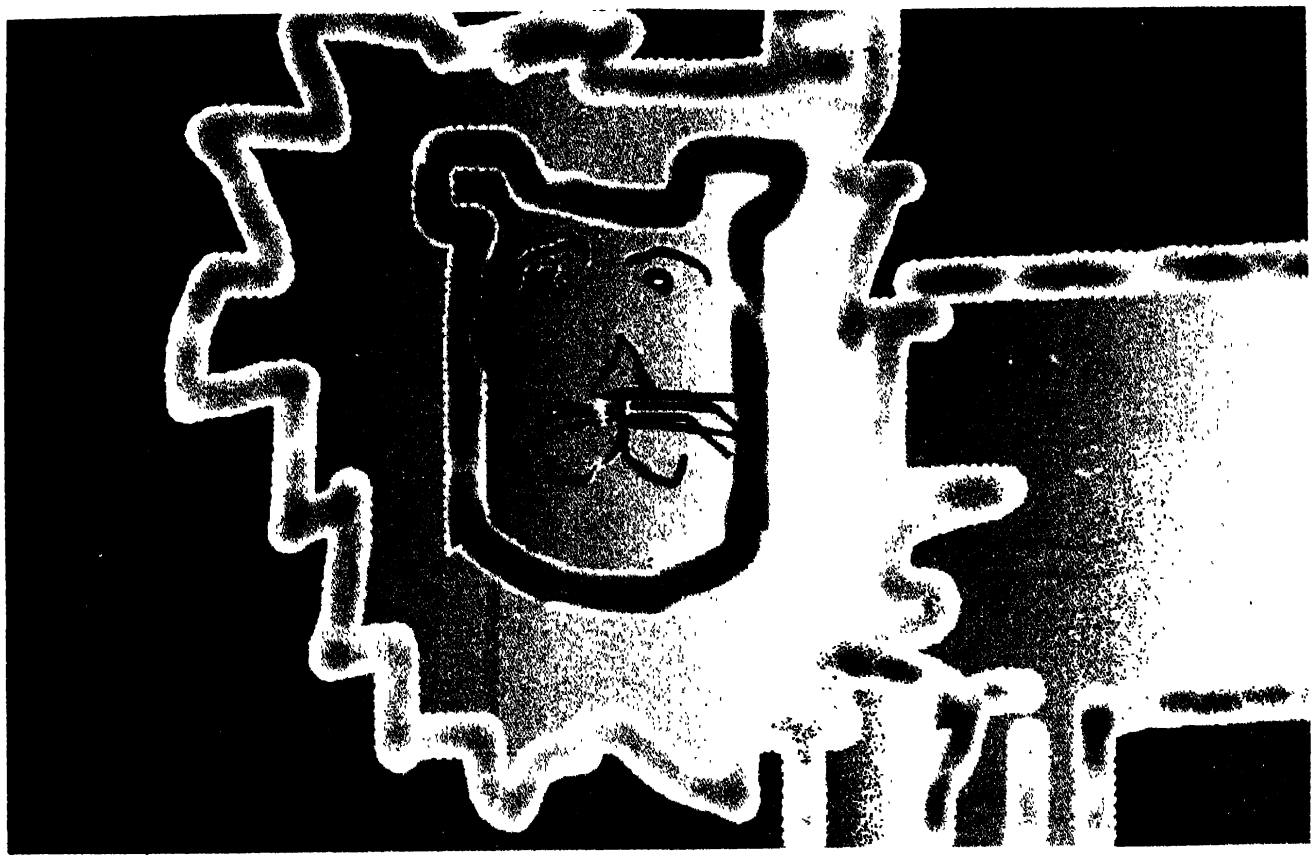
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CW
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Vibrant Lion *Suraj Patel(11)*

AND NOW, DIGITAL ART

The Vadodara Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals earned a whopping two lakh rupees in two hours following an auction of digital paintings created by 61 children between five and sixteen years old, in Vadodara. Organized by Art underground, 137 digital images were exhibited and auctioned at the Digital Art Group Show by 61 Young Artists.

Using very basic painting, the children, many of them who had never touched a computer before, created 1500 digital images in a three-week workshop. The aim of Art underground was to encourage the children to explore the possibilities of the computer.

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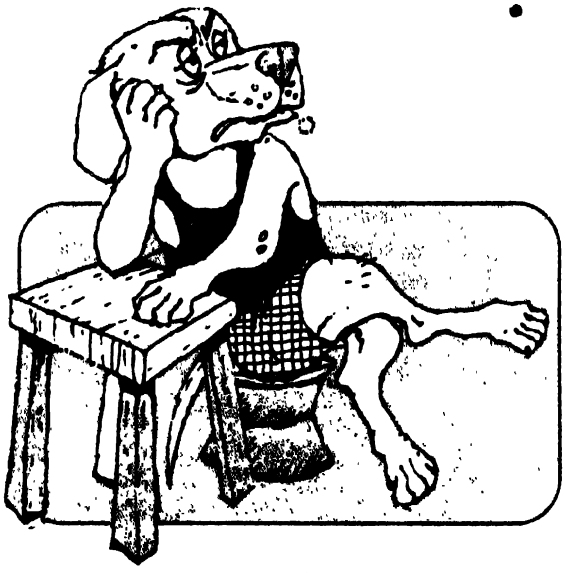
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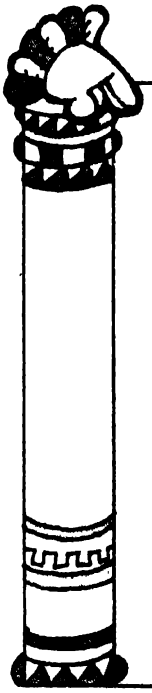
Calendar 1998





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(Courtesy: SICC)

Dear Readers,

It is here. 1998. Happy New Year. With eternal possibilities, the new year is up for grabs. Seize it. Make the best of it. Let this year be the first in a long series of achievement-filled, memorable ones. That is what we are going to make our credo. Are you all with us? Away! you doubting Thomases, you Cassandras. Wait and watch how we turn things around.

For a beginning we bring you a short, new serial about a football genius who has to drop out of school much to the despair of his classmates.

Concerned as we have been about underprivileged children, we would like to acquaint all of you with issues that relate to them. You must be among the thousands who opted not to buy firecrackers this Diwali, moved by stories of children your age, and younger, struggling in inhuman conditions, to afford you a brief moment of light and pleasure. These are children without rights. That's correct. Rights. Yes, you, as a child, have rights. Read on and find out.

Life's experiences are myriad, its lessons plenty. We cannot live through all of them. Over the next few issues, we bring you incidents from the lives of some famous men so that we may draw our own conclusions. Also, we may be able to take a leaf from their lives and incorporate it in our own.

There are many other things in store for you. Just hang in there, and watch, as the months roll by.

We are sure the new calendar will have your friends wishing they had a copy too. Some might just find themselves lucky and get one at our stall—that's Children's Book Trust—at the World Book Fair in New Delhi, in February. Look out for us.

Bhaswati Ghosh

Dear Editor,

I was immensely delighted on seeing that my poem 'The Messenger' has been awarded the third prize by the esteemed Jury. *Children's World* truly is a gem of a publication that provides a stimulating platform for our creations.

I must congratulate you for the simply incredible November issue. Each and every piece of work was unique and a true delight to read. It kept me busy for hours on end, and still demands re-reading...

Natasha D'souza,
U.A.E.

Dear Editor,

Believe it or not! I never feel alone with *Children's World*. This is the only magazine which makes me feel that there is someone with me when I am alone.

I am a regular reader of the magazine. Whenever I am free, I go to the library, take your issue in my hands and with a bright mind and interest, I start reading it. Sometimes I miss some of the classes reading CW. CW gives an excellent chance for everyone to express their views and share their ideas.

Uma Rani,
Karnataka

A MATTER OF VIEWS

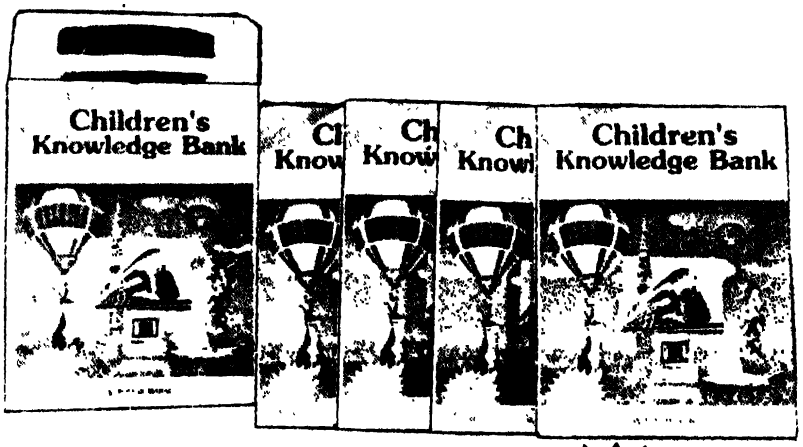
Does any issue or event matter deeply to you? Share your views with other readers of CW. Write to: A MATTER OF VIEWS, Editor, Children's World, Nehru House, 4 Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi 110 002.

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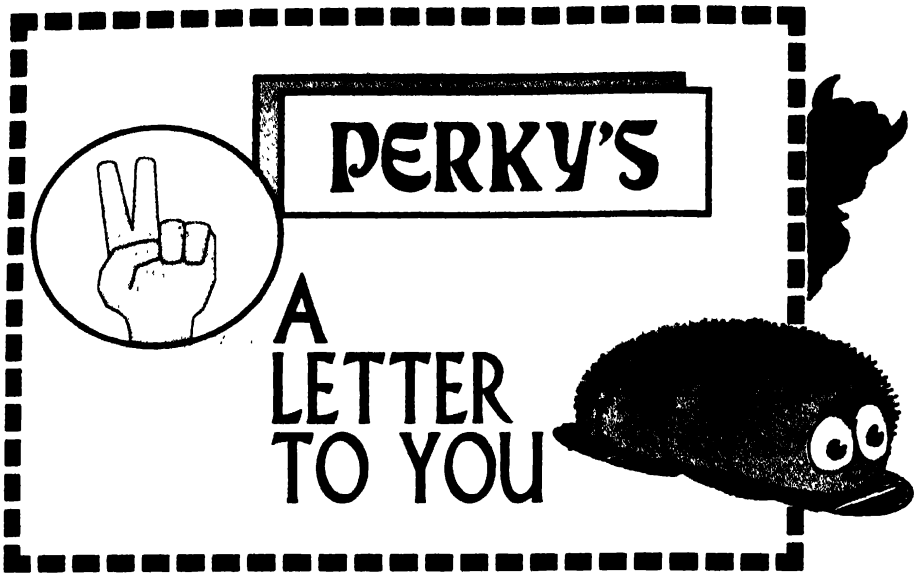
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VANDANA 24/93 CKB AD.



Dear consciences and sciences,

I don't know whether you have a conscience. I didn't know whether I have one either. In fact, honestly, I'd never thought about it. I mean in the middle of one crisis and with another one approaching you from the middle horizon and a third fluttering over your head, who has the time to think of such things like consciences? (Does it have a plural at all?) Anyway as I said earlier, I had never thought about whether I had a conscience. Even if I had, I'm sure I just let it stay somewhere hidden in the forests of my mind. I mean, I just let it stay there without disturbing it, much as I let my appendix stay, without disturbing it.

But the appendix, sorry, the conscience, I think, feels left out of things, now and then. I think, now and then, the conscience says to itself, 'Hey, everyone else is enjoying themselves and having a jolly good time and here I am, all lonely and neglected. I better do something with my life.'

So the conscience begins to jump about and make the stomach pain, sorry, that's the appendix; the conscience begins to jump about and gives you feelings of guilt and stops you from eating too many sweets. But worst of all, the very worst of all, the conscience doesn't let you sleep at night. Oh, yes, it doesn't let you sleep at night. You might have had a whole day of school work and played badminton and cricket and dribbled a football and you may have run a thousand errands for your father, your mother, your neighbour and your neighbour's aunt and you may be horribly, dreadfully tired, but your conscience will not let you sleep.

How do I know? Or rather, how do you know, is what you are asking, isn't it? I'll tell you.

Yesterday at school, I noticed that Gnat, the boy with the nose, was the centre of a big crowd, all talking excitedly. When I went closer, I found they were all looking into Gnat's pencil box and laughing and saying things. I went even closer and found that there was a green, furry caterpillar in Gnat's pencil box. A green, furry... but wait, was it a caterpillar at all? It wasn't moving one bit. And then one of the boys picked it up and held it to his nose and said, "Oh! This caterpillar does smell of chocolate!"

A caterpillar smelling like



chocolate? It wasn't a real caterpillar. It couldn't be–and it wasn't. It was a rubber caterpillar, an eraser. Imagine!

There was a big crowd around Gnat's pencil box all day, even during class. And at lunch time, the crowds were so big that I couldn't even see Gnat's nose, leave alone the rest of him. But just before we went home, in the last period actually, I found Gnat looking very sad and his nose looking very stern and bad tempered. Gnat's friends were also looking sad and worried and hunting feverishly in their bags and desks and books whenever the teacher turned to the blackboard.

Yes, the caterpillar-chocolate-smelling eraser was lost. Everybody, including me, looked everywhere but we couldn't find it anywhere. Finally, we all went home, Gnat dragging his feet along the ground like an old man.

Well, I went home and I changed and ate and played and then after dinner I sat down to do my homework. I opened my pencil box and what do you think was in there? The caterpillar-chocolate-smelling eraser! Yes! Complete with all its feet and the green colour and the furriness and the chocolate smell. Gnat's caterpillar. I was horrified! How did it get there?

And there it was that my appendix, sorry, my conscience, started jumping up and down. First it jumped up and said, "Why didn't you search your bag when everybody else was?" And then the conscience jumped down and asked, "You wanted an eraser like that, didn't you, didn't you?"

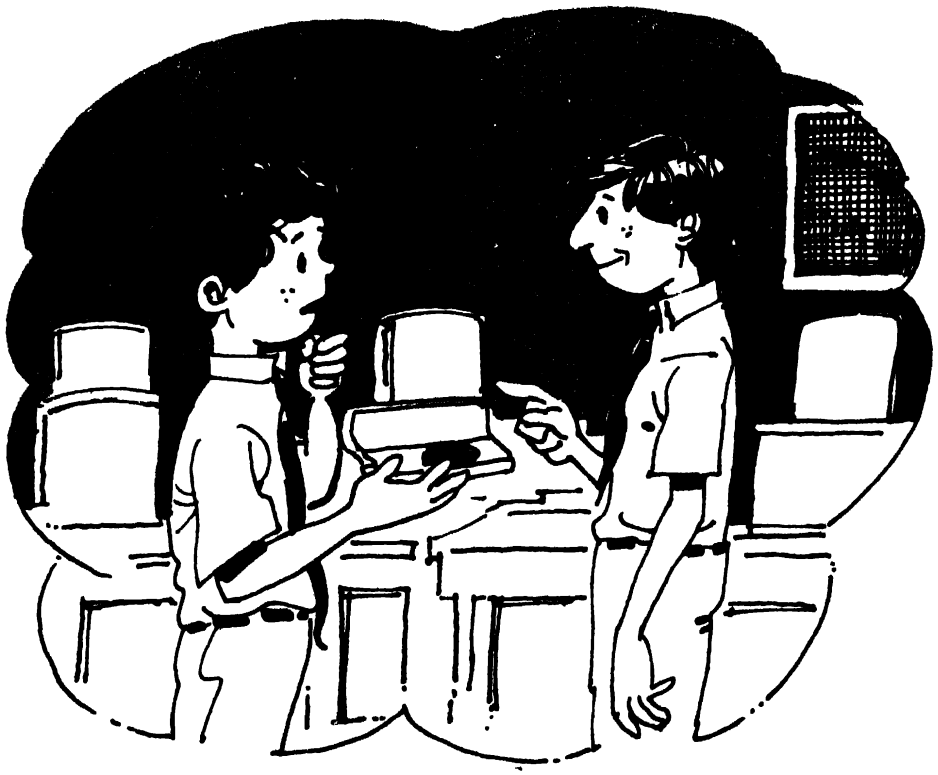
I couldn't do my homework properly and I couldn't sleep at all. That conscience of mine kept on and on at me like an almighty policeman. It punched me and boxed me and walloped me and hit me till I sat up in bed and waited till the sun came out in the east. I was bathed and dressed at least one hour before school and my mother was quite surprised. But I didn't tell her anything. As soon as breakfast was ready, I bolted it down and ran out towards school.

Thank goodness, Gnat was there too. He had come early to search for the caterpillar, he said. Here it is, I said, it was in my pencil box, and I gave it to him. In your pencil box, he asked. Yes, I said, I don't know how it got there, please believe me.

"Oh, I believe you!" said Gnat. "I know you have a very active conscience."

What! How did he know? How did Gnat know? And how did the eraser get into my box? I don't know and now I don't care. My conscience is quiet now and lets me sleep and eat. Raghu? Oh, Raghu was busy with something else.

Yours conscience-clear
Perky



The Month That Was...

By Geeta Menon

November 1: All India Radio and Doordarshan become autonomous. Prasar Bharati Bill enacted.

November 5: STD booths set up in Siachen benefitting soldiers.

November 8: Bimal Jalan succeeds C. Rangarajan as RBI Governor. Rangarajan appointed Governor, Andhra Pradesh.

South Africa beat Sri Lanka by four wickets to clinch the quadrangular cricket tournament in Lahore.

November 10: Abdu Salam International Award for Journalism goes to renowned columnist Kuldip Nayyar.

Baghdad refuses permission to Americans in UN weapons inspection team.

CBI chief, R.C. Sharma, falls from aircraft in Guwahati.

November 11: Australia defeat New Zealand in the first test at Gabba (Brisbane) by 187 runs.

November 12: Pakistan Supreme Court orders Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to appear before it to defend the contempt of court charges levelled against him.

November 13: Dilip Parikh Ministry in Gujarat wins vote of confidence.

UN orders American weapons inspectors to leave Iraq immediately.

November 14: Shri N.V.N Somu, Minister of State for Defence, killed in a helicopter crash in Arunachal Pradesh.

November 17: Pakistan PM pleads not guilty before Supreme Court.

Iraq appeals for support to India in its stand off with the US.

Pete Sampras wins ATP World Championship in Hanover.

November 18: School bus plunges into Yamuna river in Delhi killing 26 children.

US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, arrives in India.

Pakistan National Assembly passes Contempt of Court (Amendment) Act 1997.

November 19: Anshuman Gaekwad appointed new coach of Indian cricket team.

Congress demands dropping of DMK ministers named in the Jain Commission report, from Union Cabinet.

Indira Gandhi Prize for peace, disarmament and development, 1997, awarded to Jimmy Carter, former US President.

Bomb blast in Hyderabad kills 26 people.

November 20: Kalpana Chawla, 37, Indian-born aerospace engineer and five other astronauts in the U.S.A. zoom into orbit on a two-week science mission.

November 22: Femina Miss India, Diana Hayden, 24, wins the Miss World crown at Mahe, Seychelles.

November 23: Nikhil Chakravarty appointed first Chairman of Prasar Bharati Board.

Leander Paes and Mahesh Bhupathi lose to Rick Leach and Jonathan Stark in the finals of the ATP World Doubles Championship.

November 26: Bharat Ratna awarded to Avil Pakir Jalaluddin Abdul Kalam, pioneer of India's missile programme.

November 28: Congress withdraws support to Government. Prime Minister I.K. Gujral resigns.

Militants blow up oil pipelines in Assam.



Story : Swati Bhattacharjee Illustrations : Beejee

WHEN ZIDDI reached the edge of the forest, it was getting dark.

No one in Ziddi's village would dream of entering the forest at night. Even during the day, only a few woodcutters dared to go into it. For it was an endless, vast jungle, full of dancing shadows.

But into this strange forest Ziddi went, that too on a moonless night. He wanted to meet the Blind Witch.

The Blind Witch, said village elders, guarded a treasure that even kings could not dream of. But she would give it only to the man who would go into the jungle on a moonless night, find her out and do what she told him to do.

When Ziddi said he wanted to go in search of the treasure, his mother started crying and his father became angry.

"Don't you eat rice twice a day, and hot milk every morning?" he scolded. "Didn't I buy you the red *kurta* you wanted? Why then do you need the treasure?"

"I will go into the forest," replied Ziddi.

"Here, take my flute which you love, but don't go to the Blind Witch," said his brother.



"I will go into the forest," said Ziddi.

Even the village *mukhia* begged Ziddi not to go. "Those who look the Blind Witch in the face either die or become mad," he warned.

But Ziddi would not listen. So now he stood at the edge of the great forest that looked even more terrifying as night descended upon it. To Ziddi, the forest was like a huge, dark, crouching beast, waiting to spring upon anyone who dared to stray near it.

When Ziddi reached the hut of the Blind Witch, dawn was breaking. He had spent the longest, the most fearsome night of his life walking into the bowels of the forest. Slimy things had walked over his feet, strange creatures had breathed on his cheeks, his neck. Once he thought he heard a whisper, then a whine. But apart from the slush of mud and rotten leaves sticking to his feet and the numerous scratches from the thorn of *babla* plants, he was unharmed. He had arrived, alive, to face the Blind Witch.

How calm and peaceful the Witch looked! Ziddi thought she would be an ugly, angry woman, talking in a high, sharp voice. But when she spoke—even before he had spoken—her voice was low and sweet. "So you didn't listen to your people?" she said. "Do you know, no one in your home has



eaten since yesterday? They will fast today also."

Ziddi did not answer her. Instead, he said, "I want the treasure. What do you want me to do?"

The Witch sighed. She was washing some rice. Her long, thin fingers did not let a single grain escape from the bowl along with the water. "You are but a child. What will you do with the treasure?"

"I can bring you the skin of the black cobra," said Ziddi. "I can climb the highest tree to get vulture's eggs for you. I can kill a crocodile and bring you its left eye, or the wing of a bat, or the hind leg of the *kola* toad."

The Blind Witch laughed. Her laughter was like clear water rippling over loose stones. "Do you think I eat toad's—leg curry and vulture's—egg omelettes? Is that what they say in the village?"

"I want the treasure!" shouted Ziddi. "I come all the way and all you do is laugh!"

"Laugh!" echoed the Witch, and laughed some more, her white hair shaking, her face breaking into a thousand wrinkles.

Now Ziddi was furious. He stamped his feet and shook his fists. Slowly, the Witch became quiet. Her blind eyes were level with Ziddi's; he had an uneasy feeling that she could see him.

"What I want you to do, Ziddi, is to laugh."

"Laugh?" Ziddi could not believe his ears. "To get the treasure, all I must do is laugh?"

"Yes."

"Are you making fun of me?"

"No."

"Will you give me chests of rubies and emeralds if I laugh?"

"Yes," said the Witch.

"But diamonds? What about diamonds?"

"Diamonds too, if you want."

"And money? Will you give me enough money to build a house larger than the *mukhia's*?"

"You can have as much money as you want."

"Then here goes..."

Ziddi took a deep breath, and let out an immense laugh.

"Ha ha ha," he went, his mouth wide open, his throat swelling up with the effort of pushing out so mighty a sound. Birds sprang up from trees, rabbits scurried to their holes, and a tiny monkey cub that was just learning to climb fell to the ground from the branches.

At last Ziddi stopped. Sweat was running off his brow. The Witch sat unmoved, her blind eyes unblinking.

"Well? How was that for a laugh?" said Ziddi, panting.

"It was not a laugh," replied the Witch.

"What?" cried Ziddi, now hoarse.

"You did not laugh at all," said the Witch. "You only made a sound like a laugh, like the hyena."

Ziddi opened his mouth to protest, but closed it again. The Witch was right, after all.

'I must think of something funny so I can really laugh,' thought Ziddi.

He sat down under a tree and thought hard. He remembered the time a magician had come to their village. After showing some tricks, he had asked for a 50 rupee note. Gangadhar, a rich farmer but a miser, proudly held up one—the only 50 rupee note in the village. The magician took it and, smiling, tore it up. How Gangadhar raved and cursed! The more he shouted, the more the magician smiled. At last, when Gangadhar was about to beat him, the magician pulled out the note from behind Gangadhar's ears. How sheepish the man looked! Ziddi and his friends had laughed and laughed at the sight of his face. Now too, Ziddi started laughing—a good, hearty laugh. He ran to the witch and stood in front of her, laughing.

"That's mockery!" cried the Witch. "That's not a laugh."

Again Ziddi sat and thought. This time, he remembered how the children of the village tied *phuljharis* on

the tails of the dogs on Diwali. How the dogs ran! How funny the *phuljharis* looked–dashing lights in the dark. Ziddi stood before the Witch and laughed, the frightened animals running before his mind's eyes.

"You call that a laugh? I hear only the sound of cruelty!" scolded the Witch. And again, when Ziddi showed her how he had laughed when he had won over all his friends' marbles, she shook her head, "That is pride, not a true laugh."

All day long, the Blind Witch had to listen to Ziddi's laughs. After the thirty-third laugh, she took to only shaking her head, and after the fifty-seventh laugh, she chased Ziddi with her stick. "You who bray like a donkey and hoot like an owl, come back only when you learn to laugh!"

And so Ziddi wandered in the forest, in search of laughter. He thought of all the smiles and laughs he had known–his mother's sweet smile when she talked to her old friends, his father's roar of laughter when he heard a joke, his brother's squeal of joy when he caught a fish. Which was a real laugh?

Ziddi also watched he animals and the birds. When the crow flapped its wings and said 'caw-caw' to other crows, was he laughing? Did the sparrow laugh when she bathed in a pit full of dust? Were the bees humming or laughing? Did the deer laugh when they went down together to drink water? Did the tiger laugh when it roared after catching a deer?

Day after day, Ziddi fell asleep thinking of laughter. All night, he dreamt of various laughs. Often, he would be so lost in the thought of laughter that he forgot to eat the few fruits and roots that had become his food.

Then one day, when Ziddi had started thinking he would never find laughter, laughter came to him.

It happened one morning. Just as Ziddi dipped his cupped hands into a stream to lift water to wash his face, the stream gurgled with laughter.



Surprised, he looked up. Why, even the trees were laughing with a merry, rasping sound. Ziddi looked further up–the sky smiled down; he looked down, the grass was giggling.

And now Ziddi felt laughter rising from deep within him. He lifted his face and laughed—it was a laugh he had never laughed before. It mingled with the laughter of the trees and grass, the stream and the sky, and together they all laughed.

Suddenly, Ziddi heard another voice, another laughter—a sound like water running over loose stones. He turned around and, sure enough, the Blind Witch was standing there. Ziddi ran to her and she clasped him in her thin arms. Ziddi's cheek rested on her chest, and he could hear the sound of laughter rising from inside her.

At last, the Witch let him go. "So how many kilos of diamonds would you like, Maharaj Ziddi?" the Witch smiled.

Ziddi stared, open-mouthed. So deeply had he thought of laughter that he had forgotten all about the treasure! Now, once again, he remembered the diamonds, rubies, emeralds, all his for the asking!

Ziddi sat and thought. The rustling leaves whispered to him, the stream babbled like a child by his side. At last, he looked at the Witch. "What will I do with the treasure?" he asked.

"I don't know. You didn't tell me, remember?"

"Why don't you use the treasure yourself, Witch Mother?"

"What for?" said the Witch, and laughed. "Don't I have the best treasure of all?"

"What is it?" asked Ziddi.

"Don't you know? Can't you see what it is, even when you have got it?" Saying these words, the Witch shuffled to where Ziddi was sitting, and kissed his forehead.

Suddenly, Ziddi knew Why, it was laughter! What can be so pure, so joyous, so abundant as laughter? What use would be gold coins and silver dishes to him? They could not make him laugh! He'd only have to listen to the trees, the water, the sky...

The Witch laughed as she waved him goodbye. Ziddi laughed back, and ran through the forest. He ran all day and it was nearly dark when he came upon his village.

Everyone rushed to him. They could hardly believe their eyes. "We thought you would never return!" they cried.

"Have you got the treasure?"

"Oh, yes, I've got it," laughed Ziddi.

"Where is it? Did you bury it somewhere?"

"Oh, no!"

"Did you hide it in a crack in a tree trunk, then?"

"No, no."

"Then, where is it? Where is the treasure of the Blind Witch?"

"I have it right here, with me. Can't you see?" laughed Ziddi.

As he stood there, laughing, the villagers stared at him. For seven long minutes, they stared. Then a man shouted, "He's mad! He looked the Blind Witch in the face, and he has become mad!"

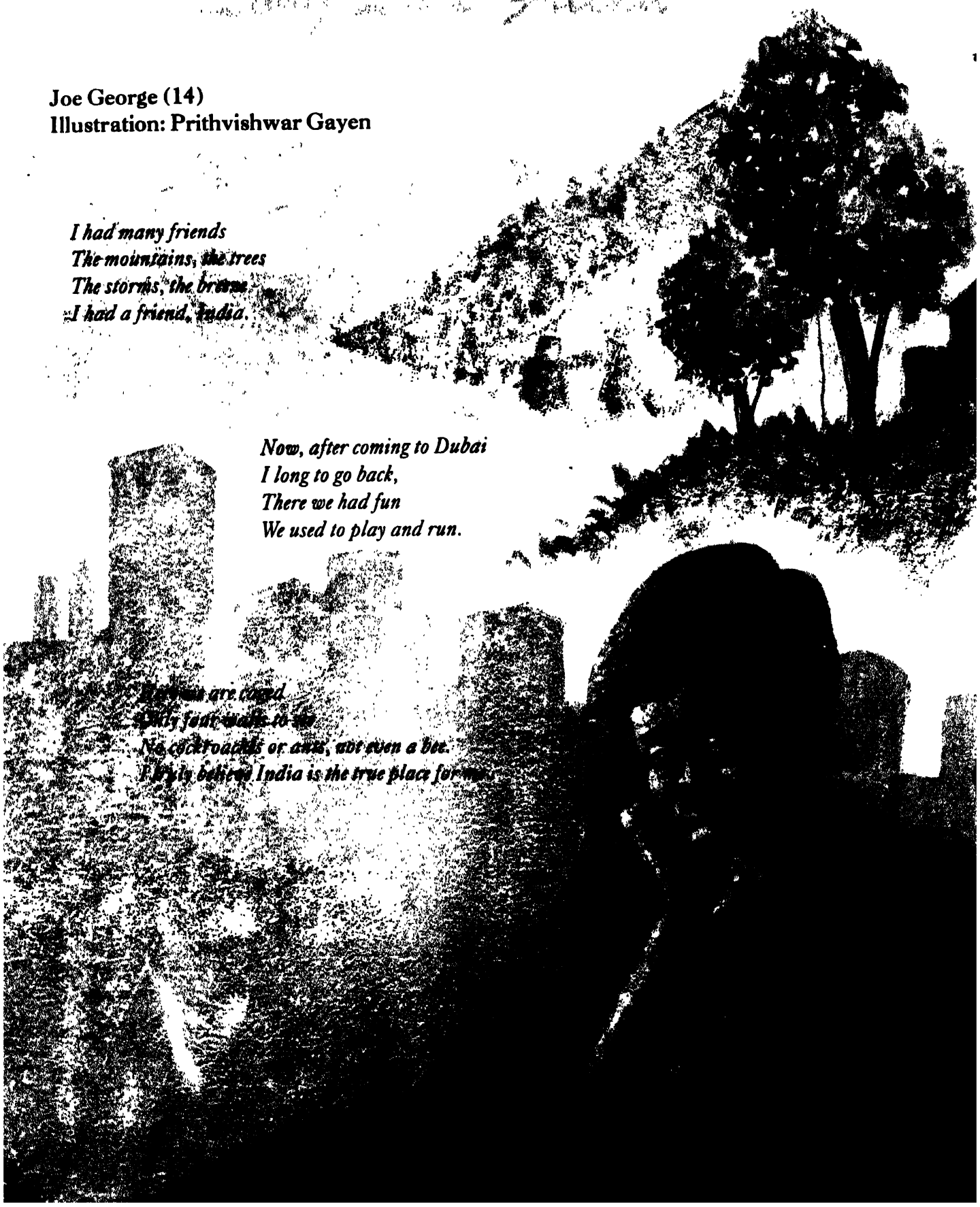
"No, I'm not," Ziddi shouted back. "Listen to me..."

But there was no one to listen to him. All the people, his brother among them, had run away.



[illegible] Friend

Joe George (14)
Illustration: Prithvishwar Gayen



I had many friends
The mountains, the trees
The storms, the breeze
I had a friend, India.

Now, after coming to Dubai
I long to go back,
There we had fun
We used to play and run.

[illegible] are caged
Only four walls to see
No cockroaches or ants, not even a bee.
I truly believe India is the true place for me.



TRUTH

above All

Story : Thangamani **Illustrations : Ajanta Guhathakurta**



THE beggar woman was sitting at the same place under the lamp-post. Every time he passed her, Subhas Chandra Bose, who was a student of the Presidency College, Calcutta, was struck by a fresh wave of pity for her. She looked more

decrepit and hungry every passing day. Her sad eyes and the tattered clothes that hung about her wasted body pained him. He looked down guiltily at his own clean clothes.

'What right do I have to live in a three-storey house when this miserable beggar doesn't have a roof over her head?' he thought. He felt as if he had committed some crime because he had things she didn't have. He was angry at the social system that made them unequal. He wanted to help her in some unobtrusive way.

Suddenly an idea struck him. He touched the money which he had got from his parents for the tram-fare to college. Of course! He would save that and use it for charity.

From that day, he walked back from college, and on the days he left early, he walked to it too—a distance of over three miles one way. Subhas felt a little less guilty.

Subhas Chandra Bose was a sensitive person, who was deeply concerned about social issues. Being interested in philosophy and religion, he read avidly the works of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Sri Aurobindo and Swami Vivekananda. However, it was Vivekananda's exhortation to the youth to serve the poor of the country that struck a chord in his heart. With a few like-minded friends, he went out to do his bit for the needy. This included even nursing cholera patients.

It was during these expeditions to the poorer quarters, that Subhas came face to face with the poverty, illiteracy and disease that afflicted the rural population of India.

He was socially conscious but he didn't take much interest in political matters. Neither Gandhiji's non-violent protest against the British, nor the terrorist-revolutionary activities that were discussed in the Presidency College hostel, held any particular attraction for Subhas.

However, about the time when World War I broke out, Subhas fell ill. Lying on his sick bed, he had ample time to reflect about the plight of India. While following the course of the War, he came to the conclusion that if India had to be liberated, it had to be done on all fronts—civil and military. Only a country that had military power could remain free.

There were other things that began disturbing him too. In Cuttack, where he had lived before, he had had no occasion to personally come in contact with racial discrimination practised by the British. He had only heard of Indians in high positions—High Court Judges and the like—being refused entry into upper class compartments of trains. But in Calcutta, he saw scenes of Indians being humiliated by the British daily—in tram-cars, on the streets, even in college, where British professors were rude to Indian students.

Once while Subhas was travelling by tram, he saw an Englishman sitting with his feet up on the seat in front of him, where an Indian gentlemen sat. The latter was squirming uncomfortably, but silently bore the insult. He was obviously a poor clerk.

Subhas couldn't keep quiet. "Please put your foot down. You are soiling the clothes of the gentleman in front of you," he told him.

"Then let him get up from the seat," retorted the Englishman arrogantly.

This infuriated Subhas and he answered back angrily. Seeing him do so, others joined him in berating the Englishman. However, the Indian who had been insulted, quietly got down from the tram, much to

'What right do I have to live in a three-storey house when this miserable beggar doesn't have a roof over her head?' he thought. He felt as if he had committed some crime because he had things she didn't have.



the despair of Subhas Chandra.

Whenever Indians reacted to such insults, the Englishmen became subdued. This gave Subhas the idea that all it required for Indians to be emancipated was to retaliate in kind to British atrocities.

One day, he heard of an English professor, Mr. F.E. Oaten, manhandling some students. Apparently the Professor was disturbed by some students passing outside his lecture room. Annoyed, he came out and violently shoved the students in front. Subhas Chandra Bose, who was the class representative, heard about the incident and went along to see what the matter was. He then briefed the Principal about the incident.

"Sir, I think Professor Oaten should apologize to the students," said Subhas.

"Mr. Oaten belongs to the Indian Educational Service and I don't have the power to make him tender an apology. Moreover, he did not manhandle anyone. He only took them by their arm. I don't think that constitutes an insult to the students," replied the Principal.

Subhas tried to argue with him, but the latter was quite adamant in his opinion. The students were incensed. The next day there was a general strike in the college to protest against the incident. Since the Presidency College was a prestigious one the news of the strike sent shock waves through the city. The Principal tried all sorts of persuasive and coercive tactics to break the strike, but didn't succeed. Subhas was singled out as the instigator of the entire episode. The Principal levied a fine on all the students who were absent.

One professor, who was fond of Subhas, felt concerned about the consequences of such a strike on the latter's career. He asked Bose, "Are you aware of what you are letting yourself in for?"

"Yes, Sir, I am," replied Subhas.

"In that case, I have nothing more to say," said the professor, with a look of empathy.

Contrary to his fears, nothing untoward happened. By the end of the second day, Mr. F.E. Oaten was persuaded by the college authorities to settle the dispute amicably,

and the issue was resolved.

However, even though the students began attending classes from the next day, the Principal refused to withdraw the fine he had imposed earlier. All appeals by the students and the professors to the Principal were in vain. The students fumed in silence.

However, a month later, the same professor was involved in another such incident. This time, the students decided to take the matter in their own hands instead of resorting to a strike and inviting more punishment. Some of the students beat up the professor. Immediately after this, the Government of Bengal issued a notification that a Committee of Enquiry would be appointed to probe the continued disturbance in Presidency College. They also closed the college.

This infuriated the Principal. He felt insulted because the notification had been issued without consulting him. He created a scene at the place of the Member who was in charge of Education. The next day, the Principal was suspended for having insulted the Honourable Member.

Not to be cowed down, he decided to exercise his power before it was taken away. He sent for the students he had earlier blacklisted, including Subhas. He gave them a look of contempt and addressed Subhas.

"Bose, you are the most troublesome man in the college. I suspend you," he snarled.

As he lay on his bunk in the train en route to Cuttack, he felt curiously satisfied and happy despite his hopeless plight. He had done the right thing, and that was what mattered.

"Thank you," replied Subhas and went home. All the philosophy he had read seemed meaningless in the face of such injustice.

Soon after, the Governing Body of the College met and confirmed the Principal's order. Subhas was even denied permission to study in some other college. He was effectively rusticated from the University.

The Committee of Enquiry, summoned the concerned parties for questioning. Subhas was one of those representing the students.

"Was the attack on Mr. F.E. Oaten justified?" they were asked.

"It was not justified, but the students acted under extreme provocation. Moreover, this is not an isolated case of discrimination against Indian students," replied Subhas and proceeded to chronicle such incidents.

The Committee listened silently.

"Had you condemned the assault on Mr. F.E. Oaten, your suspension would have been lifted," said some friends.

"But how could I say something that I don't believe in? I did the right thing and I don't care about its effects on my career," said Subhas.

When the Committee gave its report, there was no favourable mention of the students in it. Subhas's name was singled out as the most unfavourable. His fate was sealed. After waiting in vain for something to happen that would reinstate him in the University, Subhas left for Cuttack. A chapter seemed to have ended and another one about to begin in his eventful life.

As he lay on his bunk in the train en route to Cuttack, he felt curiously satisfied and happy despite his hopeless plight. He had done the right thing, and that was what mattered.

This incident gave Subhas Chandra Bose the courage to stand up to any crisis, regardless of the personal gains or losses it entailed. Above all, it made him confident of his leadership and aware of the martyrdom attached to it. It would not be an exaggeration to say that this paved the way for his future role as the leader of the Indian National Army and his contribution to the freedom struggle of India.

WINNING FROM WITHIN

Story : Amit Pandey
Illustrations : Surendra Suman



Anjum headed straight for his room and slumped down on the bed, sobbing uncontrollably. Just a year before, he had been a perfectly normal twelve-year-old; a deserving student and a good athlete.

I THERE, sprinter..."

"The leaning tower of Pisa is leaning all the more..."

"Don't blow too hard or you will topple it over..."

"Ha...Ha...Ha..."

Sneers and catcalls filled the air as Anjum hobbled towards his house. His ears burned, hot tears stung his lashes and his heart screamed to turn around and give the taunting boys the treatment they deserved. But he knew he didn't stand a chance against them. So, with his head bowed, he limped into his house and slammed the door shut.

The good things in his life met an abrupt end when a car accident left his right leg near useless. Suddenly the stars in his eyes were lost in a pall of gloom. Anjum went into a serious depression. He stopped going out of the house, meeting his friends, or taking interest in his studies. The best of his friends tried to help him out, but failed, and gave up on him.

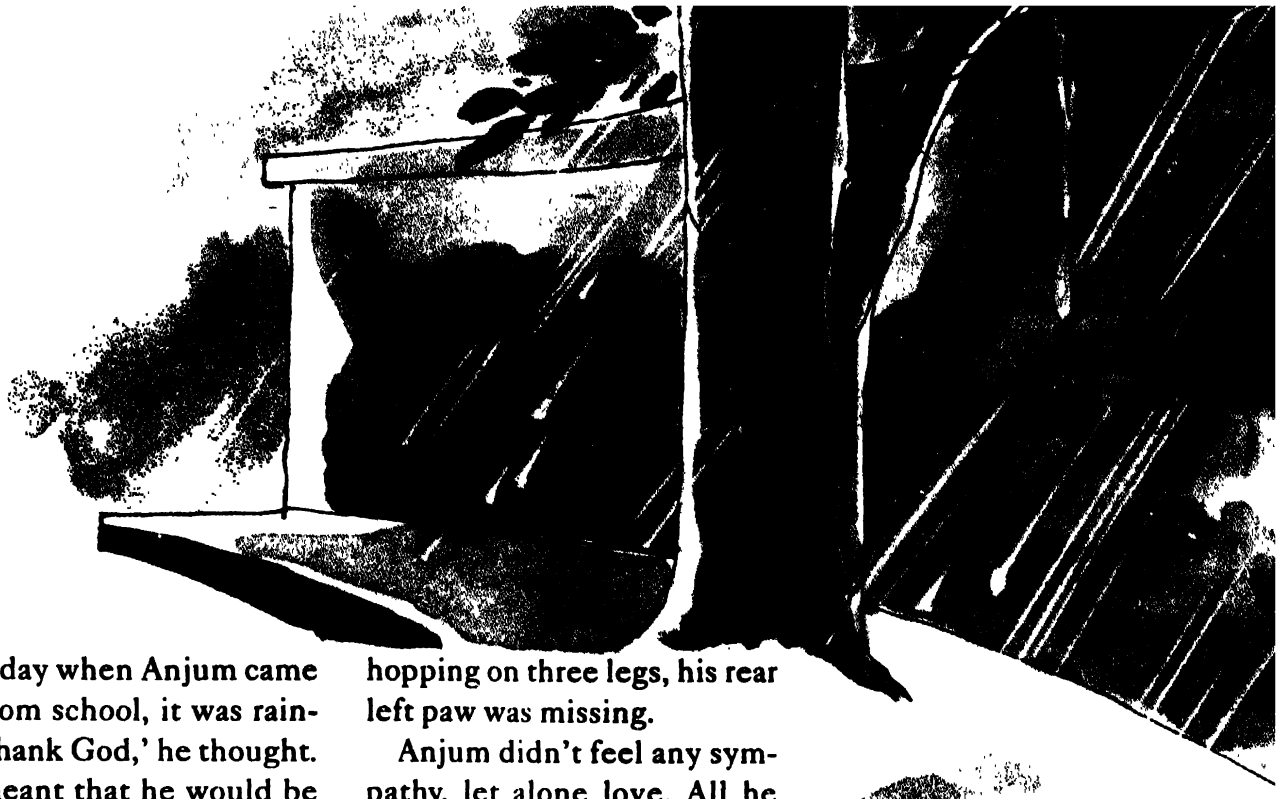
The neighbourhood kids discovered that Anjum became hysterical at the slightest mockery of his handicap, and soon





he became a daily victim of their heartless taunts and remarks. The more he reacted, the more fun the other kids seemed to have.

But there were people who just could not give up on him. Anjum's parents loved their only child dearly. They understood the pain and trauma he was going through, and wanted him to overcome his complex and resume a normal life. Their love and patience had helped Anjum get the better of his hysterical fits, but he was still far from cured. No matter how hard his parents tried to get him involved in the house, he stubbornly resisted all their efforts. Every act of kindness that came his way enraged him further. Anjum had developed a deep-rooted belief that he could no longer be of any use, and no one could be friendly towards him—they could only have pity. This made him very irritable, which soon discouraged the most genuine efforts to cheer him up.



One day when Anjum came back from school, it was raining. 'Thank God,' he thought. This meant that he would be spared of those kids and their taunts, at least for that day. As he hurried towards his house, dragging his foot behind him, he suddenly became aware of someone splashing in the water behind him. Assuming it was one of the boys trying to imitate his limp, Anjum just walked on without looking back. But when he heard no voices and the splashing continued, he stopped and slowly arched his neck to look behind him. There, following him at a distance, was a small, black pup, looking at him with a pair of beseeching eyes. The way it shook its head to keep the water out of his eyes made Anjum smile. The pup wagged his tail and moved towards him, and it was now that Anjum realized the reason for all the sloshing. The pup was hopping on three legs, his rear left paw was missing.

Anjum didn't feel any sympathy, let alone love. All he wanted was to get inside his house before any of the boys saw him being followed by a lame dog, and thought of some more hoots to make. Anjum hurried through the door and was just about to close it when the little black muzzle edged in. Anjum pushed the pup back and banged the door shut. He changed into dry clothes, had his lunch and went back to his room, all this time only too aware of the soft whines and scratching sounds coming from the front door. Twice his mother tried to find out what it was, but was stopped by Anjum with one excuse or another. Then suddenly, the doorbell rang.

"It must be your father," said his mother as she rushed over to open the door. It was his father sure enough, and in his

hands was the black pup.

"We have a visitor," said Anjum's father jovially as he placed the pup on the floor.

"So it was you making all that racket," smiled Anjum's mother spreading a small rug on the floor for the pup to settle down. Later, as everyone was having tea, the pup got up and hobbled over to Anjum trying to invite him to play. Anjum coldly kicked the pup away who fell awkwardly, uttering small howls of pain.

"Now that isn't like you, Anjum," said his father. "Why are you venting your anger on that poor thing?"

"Because one poor thing is enough in this house," Anjum shouted back. "Isn't one lame creature enough responsibility?"

"Now look here, son," said his father, trying to keep cool, "you are my son, not just a creature. Stop being so full of pity for yourself and try to be a little cheerful like this small darling. You are in a much better condition than he."



Anjum tried everything to have the pup thrown out of the house, but his father simply refused to do so. So Cookie, as his father named the pup, found a home where everyone adored him. Except the one whom he adored. But no matter how hard Anjum tried to ill-treat Cookie, the pup constantly kept coming back to snuggle between his legs or play with his shoe-laces. At times, Anjum's heart softened, but he immediately hardened himself again. 'No one can actually love you, you lame brat,' he thought of Cookie. 'You can never make a place of your own in their hearts.' But Cookie, it seemed, was out to prove a point quite contrary. He was always on the move, up to some antic or another to make everyone laugh and feel good about it. He soon started fetching the morning paper from the porch, went out with his father to get milk, and in the evenings, when Anjum sat by his window, Cookie used to go out and play with the kids. At first, they tried to pull pranks with him, much to Anjum's satisfaction, but slowly Cookie did earn a place for himself. The boys actually started encouraging Cookie to play with them. And while he formed a happy picture hopping around merrily, Anjum started to doubt his way of



thinking.

Anjum's only consolation was Harish. The ringleader, who derived pleasure from teasing Anjum, was the only one who still hadn't come to terms with Cookie.

Then one day, as the boys were playing ball, a big stray dog suddenly rushed into the scene and headed straight for Harish. As everyone ran for safety, Cookie unexpectedly hopped up and lunged at the larger dog. The poor pup was quickly thrown to the ground but it gave the boys enough time to pick up some stones and hurl them at the intruder. The stray canine ran off and the first one to rush over and pick up Cookie was Harish. The repentant boy kept stroking the little dog till it raised its small head and started licking Harish's hands and cheeks.

For Anjum, who watched all this from the window, this was the last straw. Imagine, a dog without a paw winning over everyone's heart. And here he was, with just a limp and he had almost given up on the whole world.

Next day when Anjum left for school, he was surprisingly cheerful. He attended his classes attentively, reminding his teachers of the good old days when he used to be their favourite. And when he got off the bus back from school, his head was not bowed. The kids were there. He saw them waiting for him as usual.

The first call came from Harish. "Here comes the hurricane..."

"Who can still walk straight without a cane," said Anjum as he turned around to face them.

The cool retort left the boys speechless. They were expecting Anjum to start crying as usual. But he looked straight at them and said, "Coming to think of it guys, you have a tremendous sense of humour. Silly of me not to notice it before." Anjum turned back and walked on. No calls followed.

In the evening, when everyone came out to play, Anjum came out as well.

"Can I join you for cricket?" he asked.

"And where do you fit in, pacer?" came the reply.

"Well," said Anjum, "I know all the rules."

"He's right," Harish spoke up before anyone else could. "We need an umpire."

Soon everyone discovered that besides umpiring, Anjum formed an excellent catcher in close positions with his lightning reflexes. The day ended with Anjum gaining a whole lot of admirers.

Next day was Sunday. Anjum's parents woke up to some noises in the kitchen. "Anjum," asked his mother, "do you need something, *beta* ?"

"No, mom," came back a spirited reply, "I am just going out to fetch milk."

"Really? How nice of you, son," said his father as he looked at Anjum's mother with pleasant surprise.

But the biggest surprise came just before they heard the door shut, as Anjum called out, "And don't worry about Cookie, he's coming with me."

Anjum's parents got up and looked at their son as he confidently walked on with his pal—the little dog who had helped their son rediscover himself. And that's how Anjum and Cookie were thereafter... friends forever.



Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

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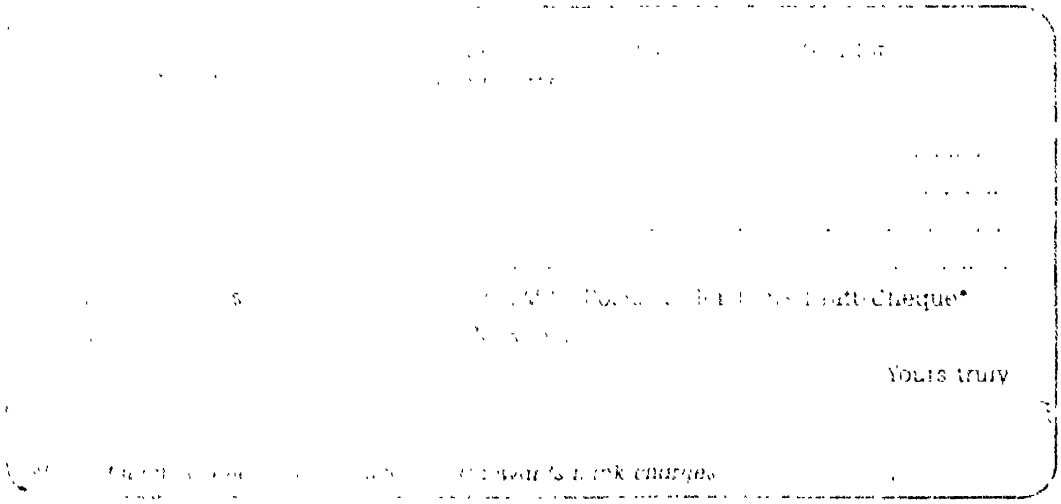
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If you are an achiever or know of one, send us a brief write-up of the outstanding achievement, award, success, or genius/prodigy. This should be accompanied by a photograph(s) and attested certificate(s) from the relevant authority.

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SHANKAR'S ON-THE-SPOT PAINTING COMPETITION

November 23, 1997

New Delhi

Young artists at the Competition this year had a variety of subjects to draw. For the 5-8-year olds—'My Mother', 'A Balloon-seller', 'A Railway Train', 'MyFavourite Animal', 'My Garden', and 'Rain'. For the 9-12-year-olds there were 'My Room', 'A Visit to the Zoo', 'Swings in the Park', 'Diwali', 'A View from a Train', and 'Travelling in a School Bus'. For the 13-16-year olds—'Mother and Child', 'A Place of Worship', 'Celebrating 50 Years of Independence in School', 'A Dance Concert', 'Climbing Trees', and 'Playing Cricket/Football'.



Reeshav Chatterjee (11), from Calcutta, won the Grand Prize in the Visa Olympics of the Imagination Contest held for 9 to 13-year-olds. Contestants were asked to think of a person he or she admired and paint or draw this person as a competitor in the 1998 Winter Olympic Games alongwith an explanation why they admired the person portrayed and why they portrayed the person in the Olympic sport they chose.

Reeshav's entry, chosen from over 5000 entries, was adjudged the best for excellence in originality, imagination, artistic ability and creativity. He drew Mother Teresa as the person he admired most in a Winter Olympic sport because he felt, "Mother is ready to do anything for the happiness of mankind... and if she can care for the poor, she can even skate for the happiness of mankind."

Reeshav, alongwith a parent or guardian, will be with 25 other Grand Prize-winners from around the world, wins a trip to the 1998 Winter Olympic Games in Nagano, Japan, in February.

The Second Prize-winner from India is Nandini Chandavula (12) from Surat. She wins a multimedia home computer with MMX technology. There were five Third prize-winners and ten Consolation prizes too.

PANDA CLUB OF INDIA

Newsletter Vol. I No. 12

Dear friends,

As we ring in 1998, I wish all my young friends a great year ahead. May all your dreams come true and let there be peace on earth. Let there be more greenery and no bloodshed. Do write in about your wishes and dreams and I will share it with other Panda Club friends through this Newsletter and the PC shows on DD Metro; together we will carry our thoughts of love and friendship forward.

With this issue of CW, Panda Club's and CW's bonding gets firmer. Through its pages we have come closer. We celebreate the first anniversary of our Newsletter and anticipate joining hands for a long, long time to come.

I have been receiving ever so many letters from you. Some of the jokes you send are so funny, I roll on the ground—the Panda way—in splits of laughter. Watch out for our Panda Club shows on DD Metro channel. You never know, your name and your joke might be a part of it—to be heard all over the country. That reminds me of a quotation which is very dear to me—"Smile a while and while you smile, another smiles and soon there's miles and miles of smiles and all because YOU smiled"! Happy reading, happy viewing and keep smiling...

Love you,

Panda

Prize Winners!

ILANA CONTEST

1. Ramnik Kaur Basra, New Delhi 2. Jaideep Dutta-Roy, Calcutta 3. Arup Ghatak, New Delhi 4. Prakash Kurup, Cochin 5. Sushmita Nath, Delhi

PHANTOM, MY HERO CONTEST

1. "Phantom is my hero because he is immortal. He protects his animals and people in the jungles."
— John K., Cochin

2. "Twinkle twinkle little star, Phantom is Panda Club's superstar." *—Aviroop Maity, Calcutta*

3. "Phantom is my hero because he is very strong and fights against villains."
—Bijal D. Mukadam, Gujarat

SUPER SAMURAI CONTEST

1. Harbir Singh Gill, New Delhi 2. C. Karthick, Chennai 3. Raghav Sharma, New Delhi

Congratulations, you super winners! You will receive your gift from STIC!

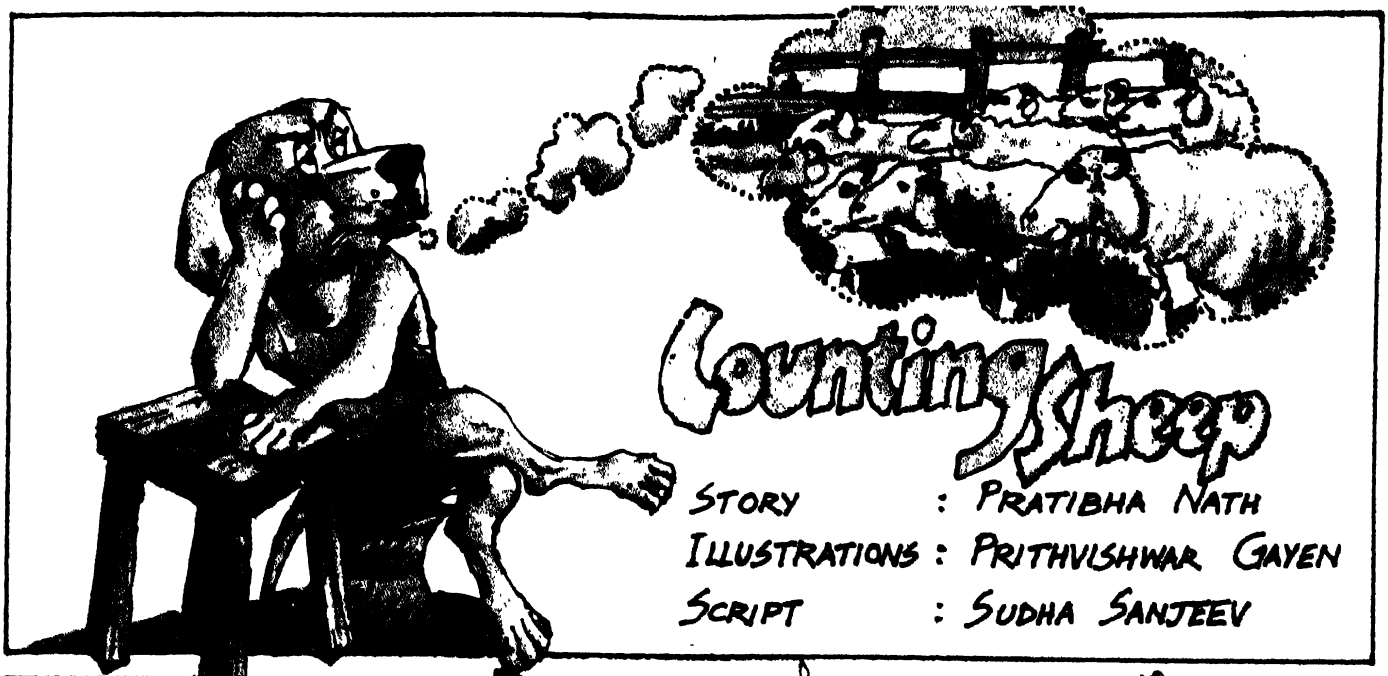
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FSE

Mr. Wilson

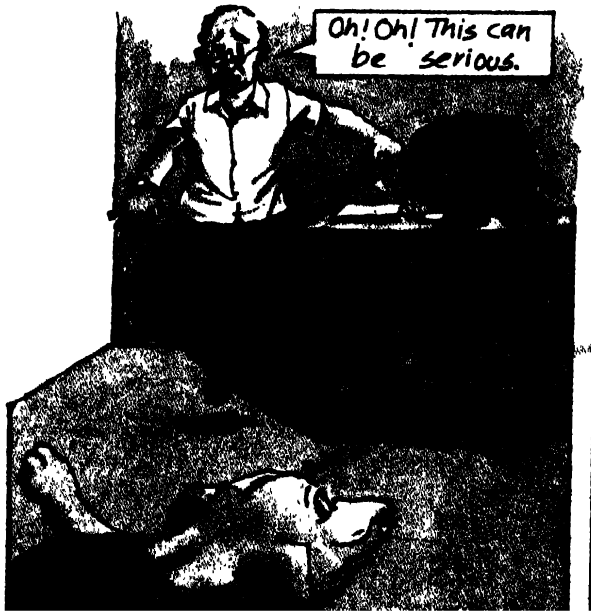
Colour Mr. Wilson, Dennis's good old friend and give it a caption.
The three best entries will receive gifts from STIC.



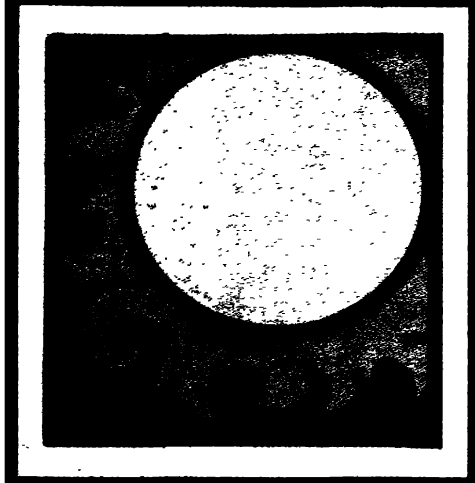

Counting Sheep
STORY : PRATIBHA NATH
ILLUSTRATIONS : PRITHVISHWAR GAYEN
SCRIPT : SUDHA SANJEEV


Dr. Sher Singh was ready to go home when.....

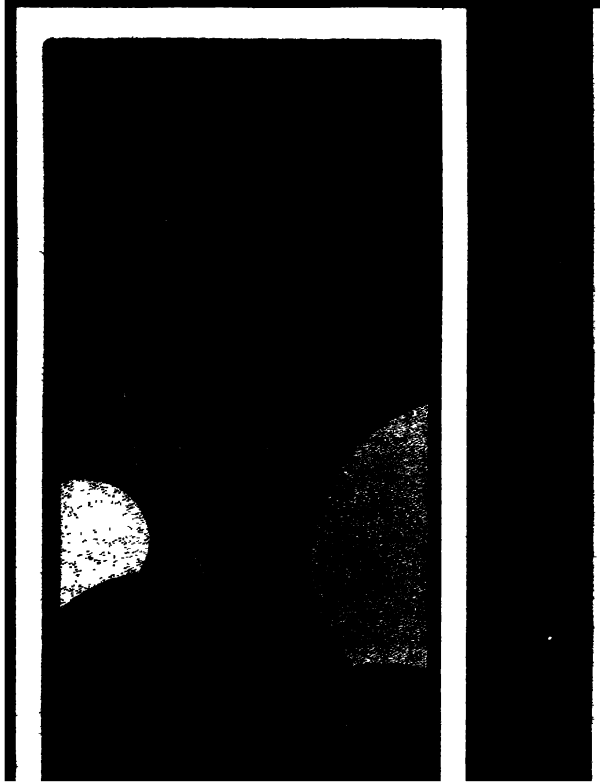



Oh! Oh! This can be serious.


Get up. You're fit and fine.
No, I am not. I just can't sleep.







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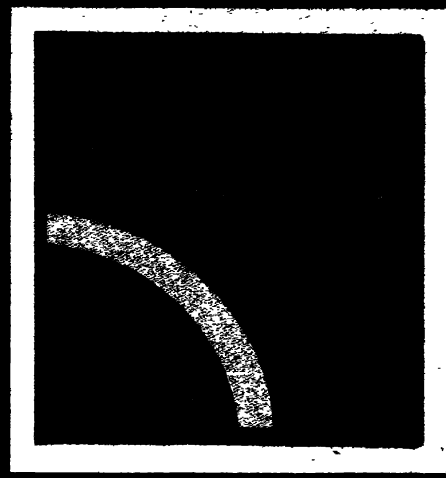
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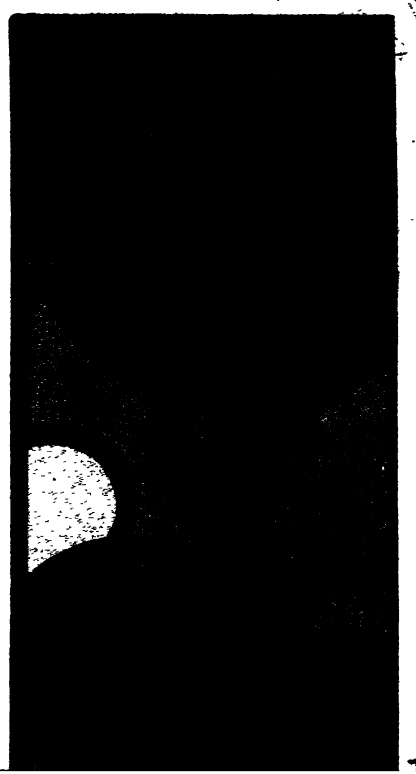
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July

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August

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Suppose you heave yourself into that chair? Then we could talk.
So, how long have you had this... er... Insomnia?
Oh, nearly two months.
I have tried a walk before bedtime, a hot drink, a cold drink, a full meal... no meal... even tried to sleep with a monkey cap.
Why don't you count imaginary sheep?
AAAGH!!! Don't mention sheep to me. I do nothing but count sheep all day!
I AM HERO, THE SHEEP DOG.


Relax, relax, Don't get worked up.
Why shouldn't I? It is the most boring, uninspiring, exhausting, dead-end job one can think of. By night I am so frustrated I can't sleep
Dr. Sher Singh gets an idea.
Go home, change the position of your bed and count crows. You will surely sleep.
Two days later
Oh, doctor! I kept counting crows and they kept cawing. Now I can hear nothing but crows cawing.
Forget counting. Be a bee.
Say buzz-buzz buzzzz. It works like a charm and makes you sleep.
A few days later.
ICE BAG
Dr. Sher Singh Veterinary
Doctor, stop the buzzing in my head. It feels like one large beehive.
ICE BAG
Open your eyes, look at me. See..... no bees.
I went to your farm today and met the sheep there.....

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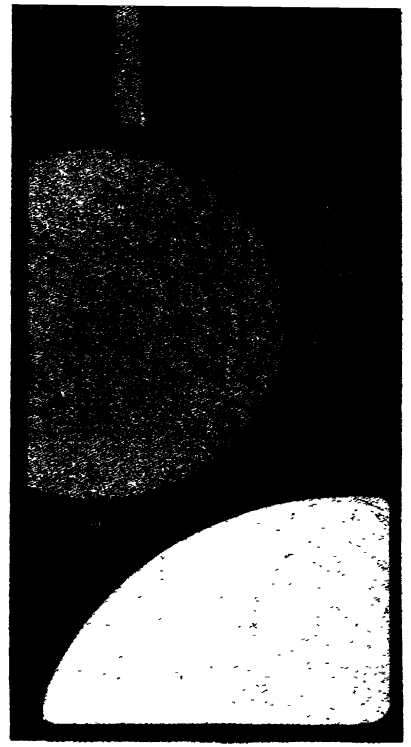
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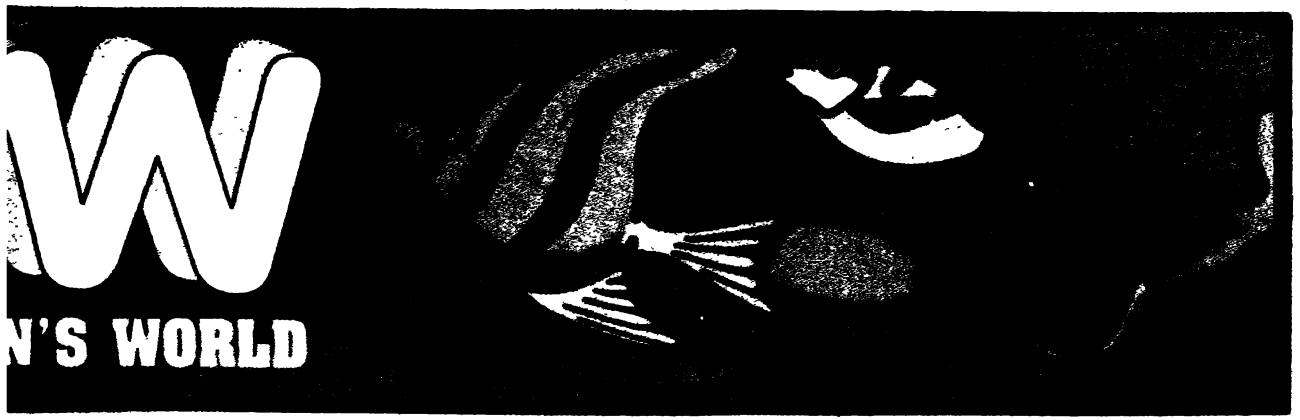
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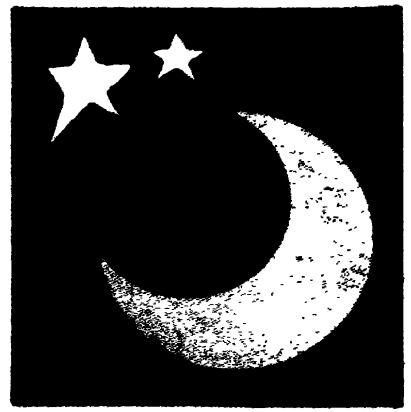
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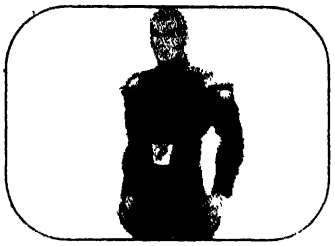
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This is what they had to say of you.....
Miko?? He is the nastiest, grumpiest, most impatient, unreasonable bully we know.
He won't let us step out of our circle - not even to eat a juicy tuft of grass.
He growls and snarls and works himself into a frenzy.
Is this true? Why don't you loosen up and give the sheep a little freedom? Try this and I'm sure you'll sleep better.
Hmm..... I do believe this time you've got it.
Here, you can keep this, doc.... with my compliments to the next insomniac.
A week later
Ah! A letter for me.
SLEEPING LIKE A LOG
- MIKO
THE SHEEP DOG
P.S. DOCTOR, CAN YOU HELP ME KEEP AWAKE BY DAY?
THE END



Monday 5.30 P.M. on DD II—FLASH GORDON : On a vital mission to save planet Earth from 'Ming the Merciless', Flash Gordon makes a rocket journey to the planet Mongo. Join the adventures of Flash Gordon.



Tuesday 5.30 P.M. on DD II—RIMBA ISLAND : Six lively, lovable, colourful costumed animal characters who dwell deep in the idyllic rain forest, share their joys and learn from one another catchy songs and simple stories—(dubbed in Hindi)



Thursday 5.00 P.M. on DD II—SUPERHUMAN SAMURAI SYBER SQUAD : Sam Collins, a video game champion and leader of a teenage garage band, fights an alien warlord 'Kilokahn' who has infected the digital world with monster "megaviruses."

PANDA CLUB

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Saturday 5.30 P.M. on DD II—DENNIS THE MENACE : Irrepressible Dennis and his unwilling best friend, the grumpy Mr. Wilson will enthral you with their hilarious antics and send you into splits.



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PANDA CLUB

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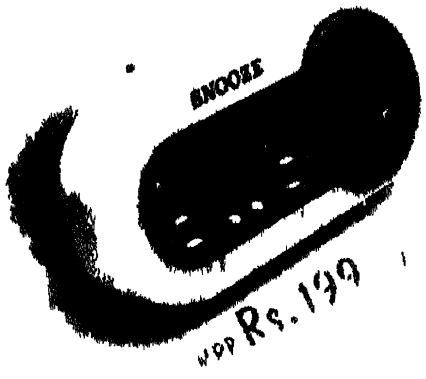
CHANNEL	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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DDK THIRUVANANTHAPURAM	MALAYALAM FEATURE FILM 4:00 PM						

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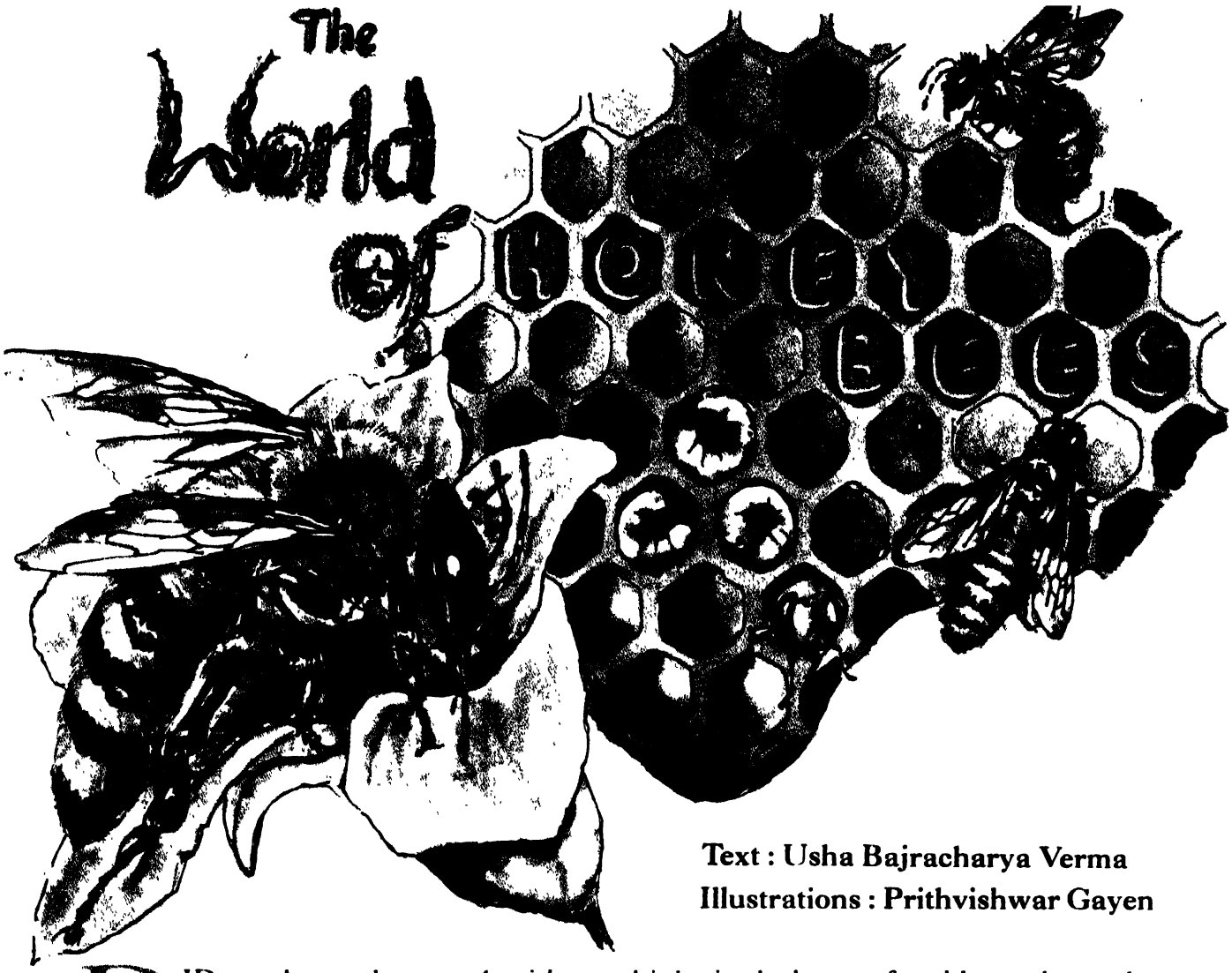
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The World of Honeybees



Text : Usha Bajracharya Verma
Illustrations : Prithvishwar Gayen

DID you know that a world run entirely by females actually exists? It is a superbly organized, tidy and secure world. It has a highly specified labour force, an elaborate social structure, an astounding communication system and a well-fed population. It is a workaholic's paradise. This world is a ruthless place; its few males are allowed to starve when they have completed their function.

This society of sisters forms the unique world of the honeybee, the most valuable and numerous of bees. They are members of the insect family *Apoidea*, which includes 20,000 species. Among them are the honey bees and the carpenter bees.

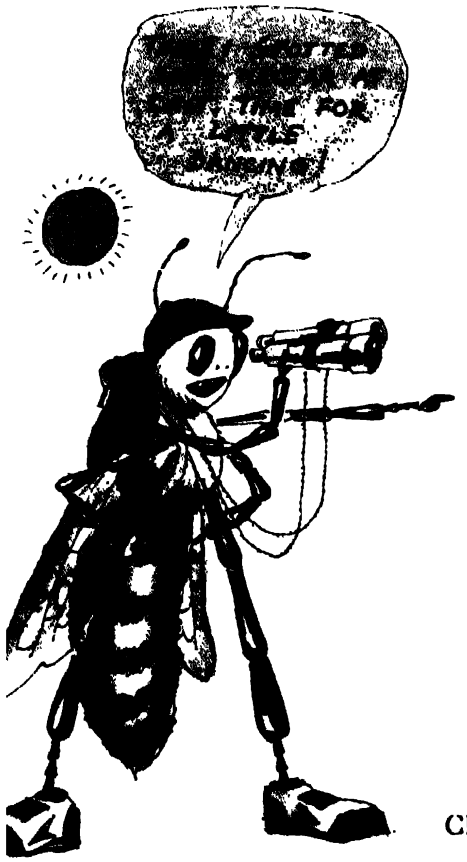
Bees live in hollow trees, caves and other places where they can build and maintain their own hives. Domesticated bees live in man-made wooden hives, built so that the frames containing the honeycombs can be removed easily with only a brief disturbance to the bees. Each hive has at least 60,000 residents.

The action inside a typical hive-city appears frenzied, but actually is as controlled as a factory. The two categories of residents, house bees and field bees, perform a great variety of chores. The house bees include the housekeepers, who clear up debris. If an object is too large to carry and move—like a mouse for example, that has invaded the hive and has been stung to death—the house-keeper removes its hair and mummifies it with propolis, a resin gathered from trees.

Other house bees include ventilator bees who stand near the entrance of the hive whirring their wings to air-condition the interior, and undertakers who remove dead bees from the hive.

There are the hive workers whose main job is building new combs to store the honey. Bees wax, a sort of fat, is extruded from the glands on the underside of the builder's abdomen. After removing the wax with their feet, the bees chew it into tiny balls to build an engineering marvel: two-layered, six-sided honeycombs used for raising the young and storing honey. Repairer bees fix old combs while carpenters spread wax on newly finished comb layers. Between and around each comb, moreover, these masterly engineers construct an elaborate road system of "bee spaces" from 1/4 to 3/8th of an inch wide.

Field bees include scouts and foragers. Scout bees buzz about searching for nectar sources. Using the sun to orient themselves, they report discoveries by a dance that communicates distance and direction. The richer the food source, the more vigorous the dance.

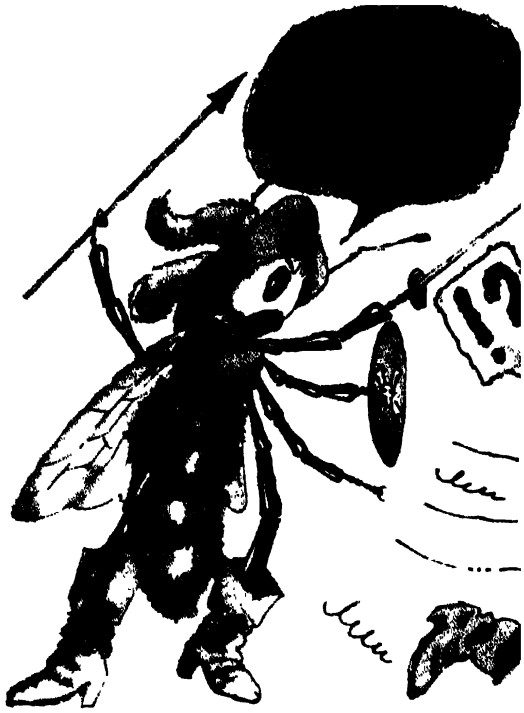


A scent discharged from the scout's abdomen upon a new nectar source and the fragrance of flowers carried by the scout from the place where nectar is discovered, also help the other bees.

Once nectar and pollen are found, foragers set to work. They dust themselves with pollen and quickly comb through their body hair with their appendages to gather the pollen in the minuscule, wiry baskets on the outer surfaces of their hind legs. For nectar they have special honey-stomachs. To collect a thimbleful, the bees have to fill, empty and refill that sac about 60 times and visit over 1,000 flowers. Incredibly, the foragers in a single hive can collect as much as 7 kg of nectar in a single day.

When a forager reaches her hive, she regurgitates the nectar. Two receiver bees then take it and transform it into honey by fanning it to reduce moisture and by using two enzymes they have manufactured within their bodies before storing the honey in the comb.

The honey supplied by the bee is guarded by bees stationed near the hive's entrance. They use their mandible antennae, feet and stingers to fight off robber flies, wax moths and rival bees trying to get honey the easy way. Guards fly out and assist the sister bees who emit the alarm-odour. The venomous barbed stinger when used, usually lodges in the victim and is yanked from the bee, killing her.

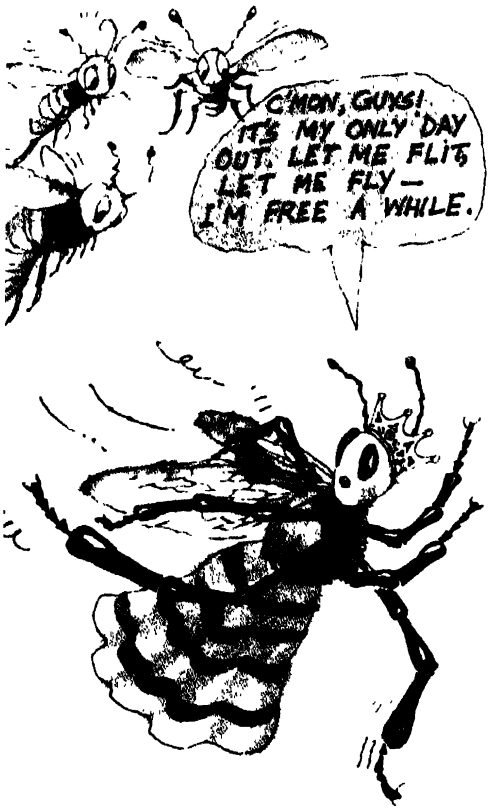


However, not all bees are busy. Drones, the males of the hive, make only five per cent of the population. Their sole task is to mate with the queen; they are so lazy that they have to be fed by the nurse bees.

The queen, the largest female, alone can lay eggs and thus replenish the population. She is fed 'royal jelly', a substance produced by a special 'feeding' gland in the nurse bee's head. The queen is constantly being groomed and

guarded by a changing retinue, but these attentive ladies-in-waiting will abandon her if she does not perform her duties effectively.

The queen is almost a prisoner in the hive. Adult at two weeks of age, she will probably make two to four nuptial flights. Several kilometres from the hive she flies, her chemical attraction scent drawing the colony's lusty drones in hot



pursuit. Mating with several drones, that die of shock in the process, the queen is impregnated. Although, she may live for five years and continue to produce workers during that time, she will never mate again.

After the queen has mated, a colony's surviving drones are dragged from the hive and left to perish a few yards away. Potential competitive queens, in the form of royal larvae, are killed by the reigning queen herself.

The queen lays her eggs in the brood area of the hive, where comb cells have been carefully cleared and polished. These eggs become tiny, white grub-like larvae in two to three days. The nurses feed the newborn larvae royal jelly for two days then they switch to "bee bread", a honey and pollen mixture. Feeding a larvae takes about 2000 visits by a nurse bee. About six days after they hatch, the larvae spin cocoons about themselves, becoming pupae. Twelve days later, the winged worker emerges, the entire metamorphosis from egg to bee, taking just 21 days.

A queen bee lays fertilized and unfertilized eggs and both hatch. The fertilized eggs are all females, containing genes from both the queen and the drones who mated with her. Unfertilized eggs produce males, which inherit their genes only from the queen bee.

The bees that emerge from the pupae stage as winged females immediately assume tasks, apparently without instruction from older bees. After 20 days, these workers perform such menial functions such as cleaning cells, ventilating the hive and collecting debris. At three weeks, they are ready for full participation in their central mission—making honey.

For more than 4,500 years humans have been utilizing bees for their honey and wax. Bees wax was man's only wax for centuries, giving us our first candles. Egyptians utilized it



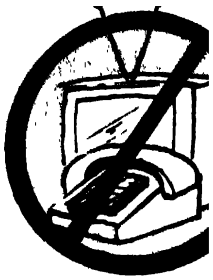
for embalming. Currently, bees wax is not used in candles alone but also in furniture wax, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals and dental impressions.

Bees make an even more important contribution to the economy. In the process of gathering more nectar, they help in pollination.

Thus, the industrious sisters of the hive are working for all of us.



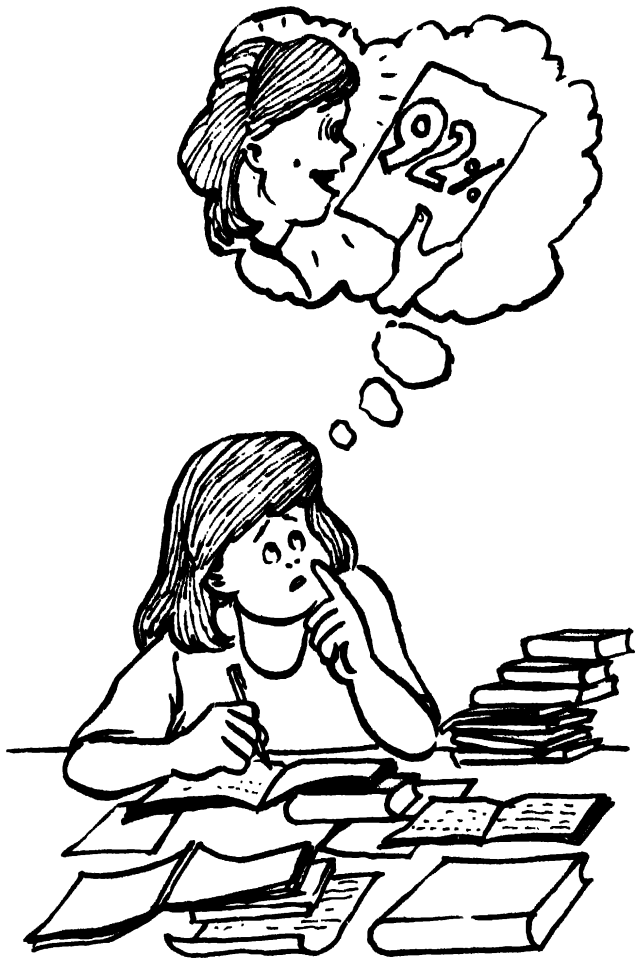
YOU CAN DO IT!



Uma Rani
Class X, Karnataka
Illustration: Prithvishwar Gayen

EDUCATION is very important in this competitve world. But what can a person do if he or she gets 47 per cent or 50 per cent in his or her Board exams?

If God has made all human beings equal, what makes a few stand above the rest? What compels some to make that extra effort needed to rise above the others; to go the extra mile to realize their full potential? Is success the bounty of a select few? Do their genes help them to achieve such dizzying heights? What does it take to be the best in everything one does? You too can be somewhere high up on that ladder within reachable distance of those achievers.



All it needs is a bit of hard work, a study strategy, patience, motivation and dedication. Is your attention wavering? Your ego deflecting you? Your self-confidence taking a beating? Hang in there! It's not all that bad! Just look at the rewards hard work brings.

Your Board exams are just over. You are in high spirits and totally relaxed. The only thing that pulls down your spirits is the thought that sooner or later your results will be declared. The day of the results dawn. You get only 47 per cent while your friend tops the class with (you can't even bear to say it) 92 per cent! What went wrong, you ask. The truth is that you just didn't bother to study as hard as your friend. While you spent your days on the phone, and nights sleeping or watching the late night movie, she spent her time fruitfully (studying).

Wouldn't you just love to be in your best friend's shoes? Wouldn't you wish that she would be the one to call you and congratulate you? Can you imagine the feeling of 'you are the BEST'? At that moment nothing else matters. Forgotten are the nights of study, the evenings when you'd much rather have been out with your friends instead of being stuck at home, the days when your books seemed to be growing out of your hands.

Pride of achievement takes prime position as you realize your dream. You too can float on Cloud Nine! Now you are burning with ambition. Remember, do not ever be afraid of hard work, for success in studies brings you glory, puts stars in your parents' eyes, and wins you friends. Never forget there is no substitute for hard work and it is the touchstone of success.

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CONFESSION

Story : Mou Mukherjee

Illustrations : Beejee

IT WAS the end of December. The cold breeze was cutting through my skin; the vast expanse of the Ganges reflected the crescent moon with rippled edges. "Do not go down to the river yourself," my mother had warned me. She had run out of her stock of Ganges water for her *puja*, and had handed me an empty five litre can to replenish. She directed me to pay four or eight annas to any boy near the bank to fill the can.

It was dark. The breeze made me shiver. The mud under my toes was slippery.

"Give four or eight annas..." I muttered to myself.

There was not a soul in sight. I did not know how to swim and did not dare to touch the water at this hour of the day.

I was playing with the idea of going back when something tugged at my can. In the dim moonlight I made out the form of a small boy no higher than the can, and a lady, probably his mother, behind him. The mother wrapped the end of her sari around herself as any other person would wrap a shawl. The little boy wore knickers and his mother's blouse held together by safety pins. He tugged at my can.

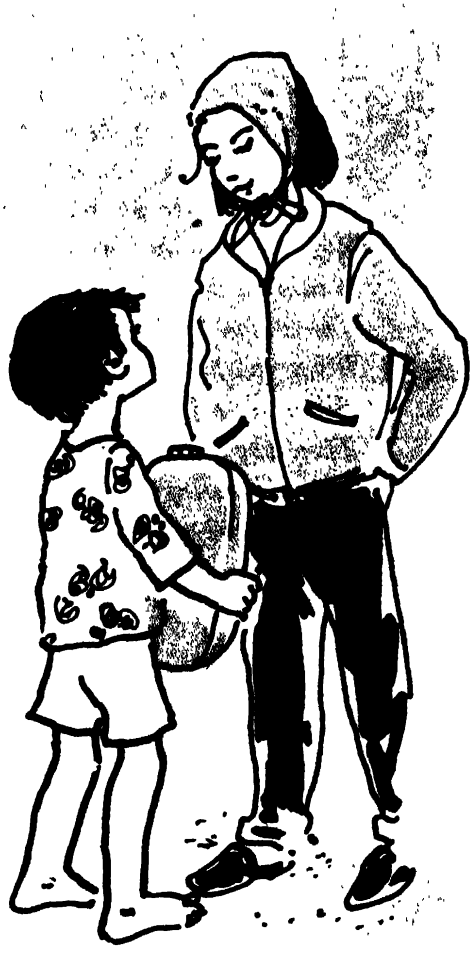
"Wanth wather? I can fetch ith," he lisped.

"Give him your can. He will fetch the water for you. He can do it," urged his mother.

Before I could decide on anything, the boy took my can and advanced to the river with small, infirm steps. I suddenly realized that I should not have given him the can. What if he slipped down the river? What if the current carried him away? What if his mother demanded some compensation for any such mishap...? I felt in my pocket among the various coins, for the fifty-rupee note, the price of a book, I had been advanced earlier in the day.

Meanwhile the boy filled the can, screwed shut the cap and, hugging it close to his bosom, inched away from the river. He took a few steps, faltered and put the can down. Again he lifted it and came a little closer. Each time he put the can down, he remarked, "My panths goth weth." Finally, when he reached me and put the can down, he looked up expectantly and said again, "You know, my panths goth weth."

I collected all the change in my pocket; it amounted to a measly sum of two rupees. I poured the coins into his small, outstretched palm and hopped back on my bicycle, drawing my jacket closer. I had saved myself from getting wet that cold December evening, but lost something precious in the process, something I treasured.





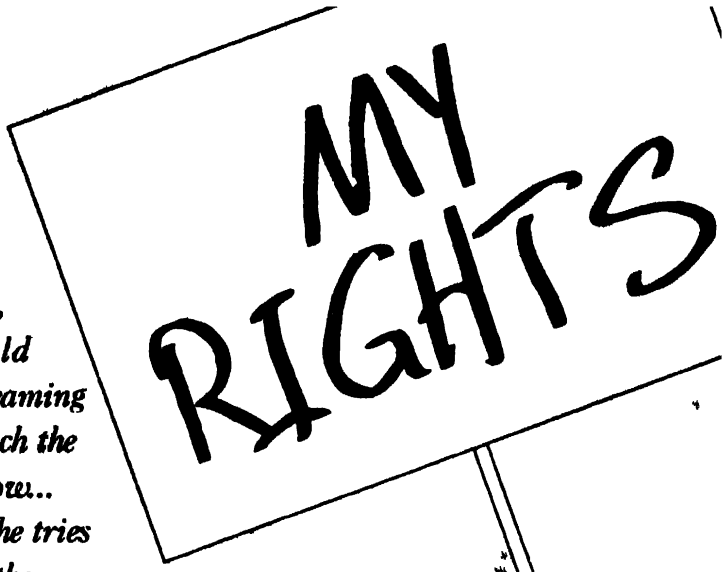




Mansi Narang
Illustration: Beejee

You stand in a queue outside a temple
And as each one goes in
A coin is slipped into the donation box
And lo! erased is your sin
A coin for taking bribes, a coin for adulteration
A coin for each stone you take out of the foundation
A coin for murder, a coin for theft
A coin for leaving the honest bereft
A coin for lying, a coin for cheating
A coin for shirking your duty
A coin for fooling, a coin for looting
A coin for undeclared booty
The idol in the temple is keeping accounts
When you put in coins, He sits and counts
When you think you pay penance for your sin
Then why this uneasy feeling within?
If you're ruling this world till judgement day
When I look you in the eye, why do you look away?

Text : Sudha Ranjeet
Illustrations : Ajanta Guhathakurta



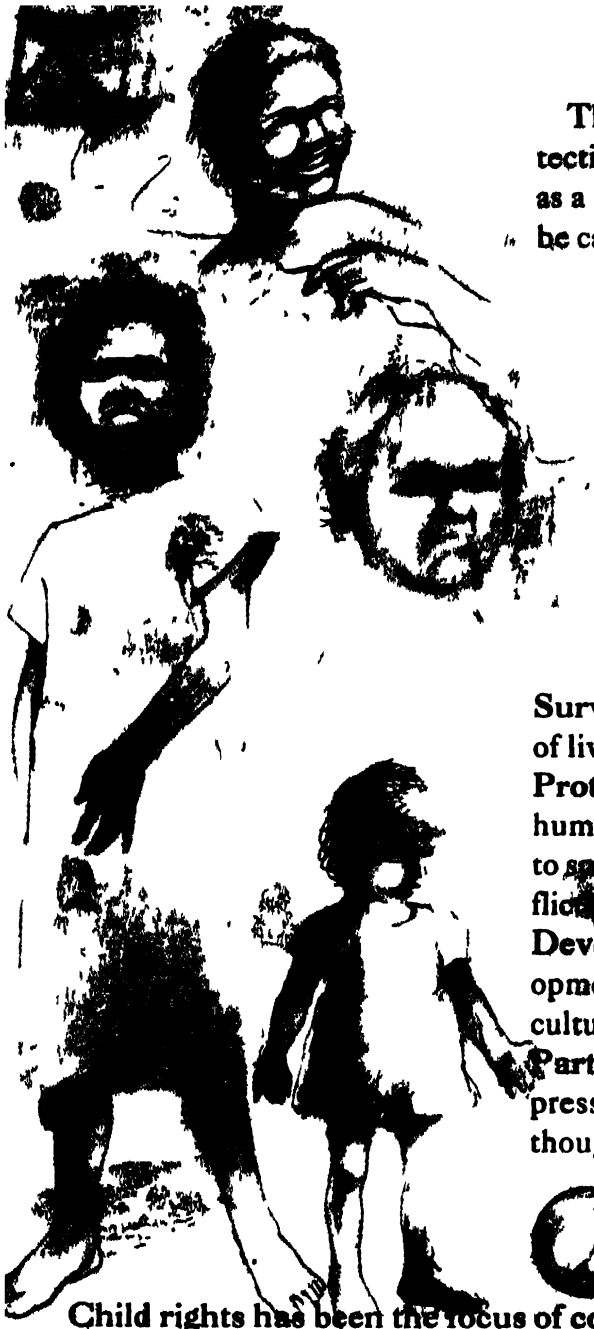
January 1, 1998. 7 a.m. New Delhi

The lights turn red. Munni, barely six years old, straightens up from the kerb, hoists her one-year-old brother to her hip and walks awkwardly to the gleaming car. If she stands on tiptoe, her eyes just about reach the bottom of the window. Two large eyes...faintly yellow... tinged with tiredness...pleading for some money. She tries but cannot push her brother high enough to draw the attention of those inside. The lights turn green. The car purrs away. Munni goes back to the kerb, puts her brother down and sits in a huddle to wait for the next car. Her day has begun....

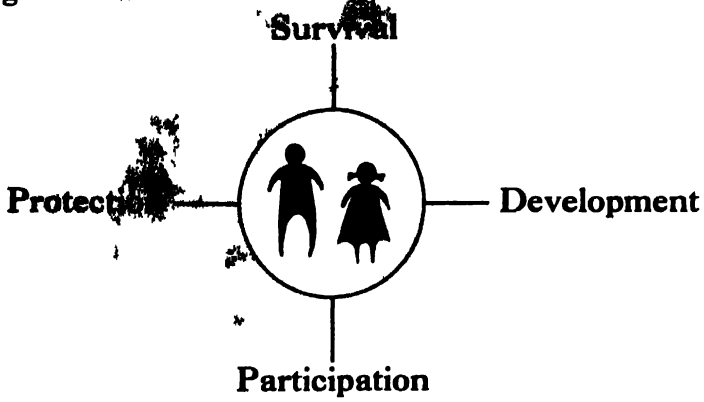
Contrast it with your own day. Does it even begin like this? Does your next meal depend on the number of coins you collect from windows of cars that whizz past you? Or are you [illegible] comfort of your blanket, waking up to a hot chocolate [illegible] into having a healthy breakfast and sent to school [illegible] with kisses? If you are, then you surely must consider yourself one of the fortunate few in our country who do not have to wait for a [illegible] whose childhood is [illegible] with [illegible] for a younger [illegible] of curiosity is not crushed forever in a never-ending [illegible] attempt to keep your life energies in your body. Good [illegible], education and the freedom of expression is what you are getting used to, not asking for it or being aware of it. These are as naturally yours as is the air you breathe.

But not so for Munni. And millions of others. Be it your own domestic help who is yet a child, or the boy working in the roadside shop, in a factory or in the fields, you enjoy something that is denied to them. And what is that? Rights. The rights of a child. Rights that ensure 'Survival, Protection, Development and Participation'.

We would like you to pause a while and ponder on some of these issues we will be focusing on in the coming months. If injustice, deprivation [illegible] but of even a single child, its ripples will affect each one of us. [illegible] positively or negatively—is a question you will [illegible] as an individual as well as a member of society. For it is the well-being of millions of [illegible]



The Rights of a Child aims at fulfilling his basic needs, protecting him from harm and abuse, developing his full potential as a human being, and respecting his views. Broadly these can be categorized as:



Survival: Right to life, health, nutrition, adequate standards of living, and right to a name and nationality.

Protection: Freedom from all forms of exploitation, abuse, inhuman or degrading treatment and neglect, including the right to special protection in situations of emergency and armed conflict.

Development: Education, support for early childhood development and care, social security, right to leisure, recreation and cultural activities.

Participation: Respect for views of the child, freedom of expression, access to appropriate information and freedom of thought, conscience and religion.



Child rights has been the focus of concern at national and international levels. India's commitment is seen in her Constitution:

Article 24 prohibits employment of children in any factory or mine or in any other hazardous occupation.

Article 39 declares that the State shall direct its policy in such a manner that the tender age of children is not abused and children are given opportunities and facilities in a healthy manner, and that childhood is protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.

Article 45 says the State shall provide free and compulsory education for children up to the age of 14 years.

This has been backed by a wide range of laws that guarantee to a large extent the rights of a child. Some of these are: The Apprentices Act, The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, The Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, The Juvenile Justice Act, The Persons With Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act.



Milestones: National and International

Recognizing the need of the hour, the Government as well as Voluntary Organizations came forward to set up institutions that would deal with vital areas affecting children such as Health, Nutrition, Education, Water and Sanitation, and Environment. These were timely.

Significant among these was the setting up of the **Central Social Welfare Board (1953)** that gave assistance to organizations that provided child care services, pre-[illegible] and similar activities.

It was during this decade that the **UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child** was adopted by the UN General Assembly.

India reaffirmed her constitutional obligations in the **National Policy for Children (1974)** so that "within a reasonable time, all children in the country enjoy optimum conditions for their balanced growth".

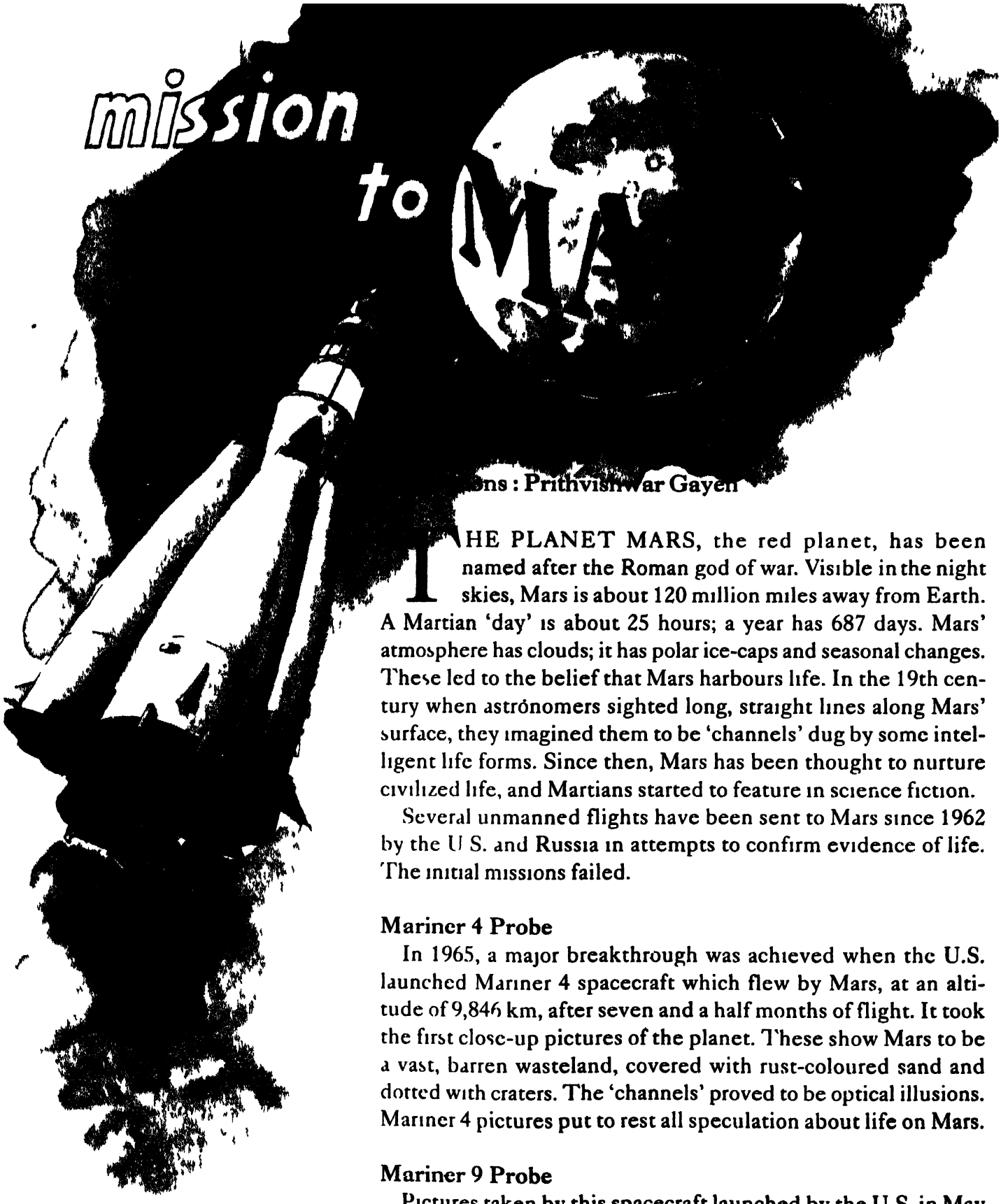
A **National Children's Board (1974)** was set up to plan, review and co-ordinate the various services directed towards children.

The National Children's Fund was instituted for providing financial assistance to organizations undertaking innovative child welfare programmes.

The Integrated Child Development Services, ICDS, (1975) was started for early child survival, and covered children less than six years and nursing and expectant mothers.

The National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development, NIPCCD (1975) was set up as an apex body for training ICDS functionaries.

India joined hands with the global efforts for the welfare of children. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, CRC, the World Conference on Education for All, the World Summit for Children are part of the reaffirmation which transcend national barriers.



ons : Prithvishwar Gayen

THE PLANET MARS, the red planet, has been named after the Roman god of war. Visible in the night skies, Mars is about 120 million miles away from Earth. A Martian 'day' is about 25 hours; a year has 687 days. Mars' atmosphere has clouds; it has polar ice-caps and seasonal changes. These led to the belief that Mars harbours life. In the 19th century when astronomers sighted long, straight lines along Mars' surface, they imagined them to be 'channels' dug by some intelligent life forms. Since then, Mars has been thought to nurture civilized life, and Martians started to feature in science fiction.

Several unmanned flights have been sent to Mars since 1962 by the U S. and Russia in attempts to confirm evidence of life. The initial missions failed.

Mariner 4 Probe

In 1965, a major breakthrough was achieved when the U.S. launched Mariner 4 spacecraft which flew by Mars, at an altitude of 9,846 km, after seven and a half months of flight. It took the first close-up pictures of the planet. These show Mars to be a vast, barren wasteland, covered with rust-coloured sand and dotted with craters. The 'channels' proved to be optical illusions. Mariner 4 pictures put to rest all speculation about life on Mars.

Mariner 9 Probe

Pictures taken by this spacecraft launched by the U.S. in May 1971 show some of Mars' spectacular features like its gigantic volcanoes and immense canyons. One extinct volcano is two and

a half times higher than Mt. Everest. It has an enormous crevasse which outclasses the Grand Canyon in Arizona. It was also learnt that Mars is frequently subjected to violent dust storms. Mariner 9 took pictures of the two Martian moons—Demos and Phobos, named after the two attendants of the Roman god of war.

Viking Mission

Two spacecraft, Viking 1 and Viking 2, were to orbit Mars, land and operate on the planet's surface. Their main aim was to search for life on Mars. They landed on Mars in 1976 and photographed the entire surface of the planet. The Viking landers found no evidence of life. The Martian soil was found to be iron-rich clay in oxide form—hence Mars looks red. Though its atmosphere mainly consists of carbon dioxide, nitrogen is also found. The north polar cap is water ice, the southern cap probably retains some carbon dioxide ice during summer.

Mars Pathfinder Mission

Water is the main ingredient of life; if there is no water, there is no life. In the low pressure and temperature such as is found on Mars water cannot exist in liquid form.

The findings of the spacecraft indicate that both running and standing water were present on Mars in the past. Scientists believe that there was a fair chance of formation of life in the past.

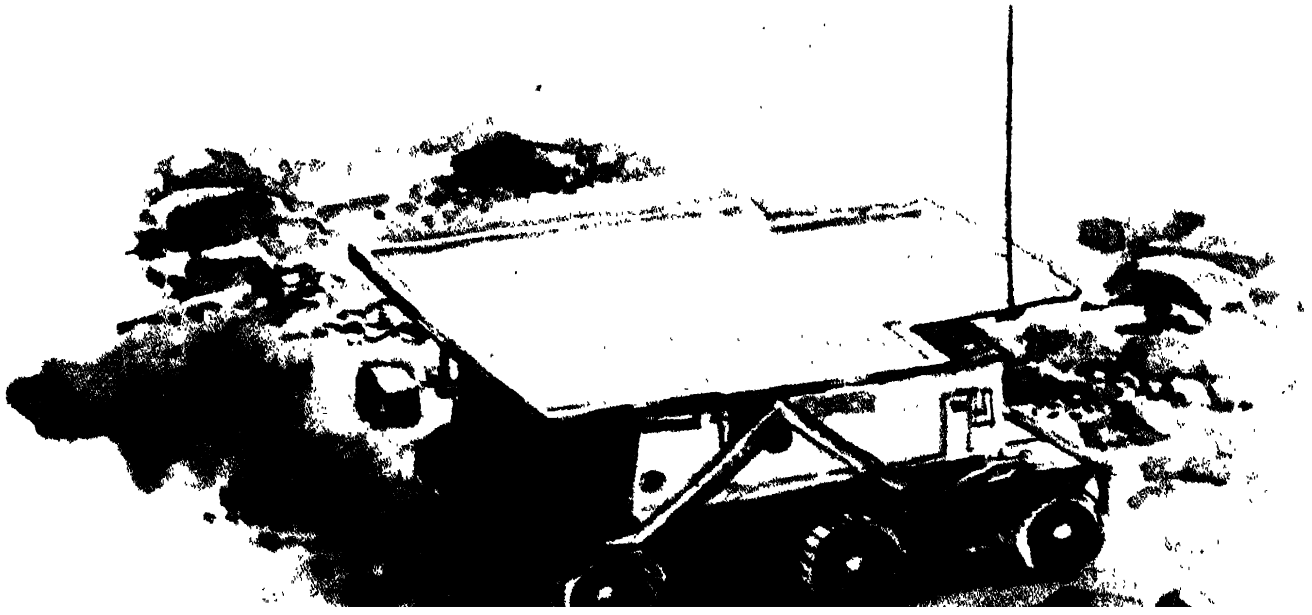
On July 4 this year, the U.S. landed their 'Mars Pathfinder' on the planet. Its main aim is to find out whether life ever evolved on Mars.

Pathfinder is special in many respects. It carries a mobile robotic rover, Sojourner, which acts as a geologist. It is a small, six-wheeled robot and moves only two feet a minute.

Can man land on Mars?

Mars is 300 times farther away from Earth than the moon. The Pathfinder took seven months to reach Mars. Considering Mars' zero gravity, the intense radiation of deep space and the right timing for a return, an astronant would take not less than three years for a trip to Mars and back. As Mars' environment is not friendly for humans, an artificial one would have to be created. Astronauts would also have to learn to make fuels from Mars' crust and soil to make the return journey to Earth. They would have to deal with any emergency since it takes at least 40 minutes to send a message to Mars and get an answer. Questions of the huge amount of money involved in building a spacecraft and launching it also pose a big problem.

Many scientists think that a journey to Mars by humans would be significant. It means going through numerous hazards in the cosmos and, as of now, a very limited ability to return. But, man's nature is to accept a challenge. Setting a tough goal and reaching it, come what may, is at the core of human progress.



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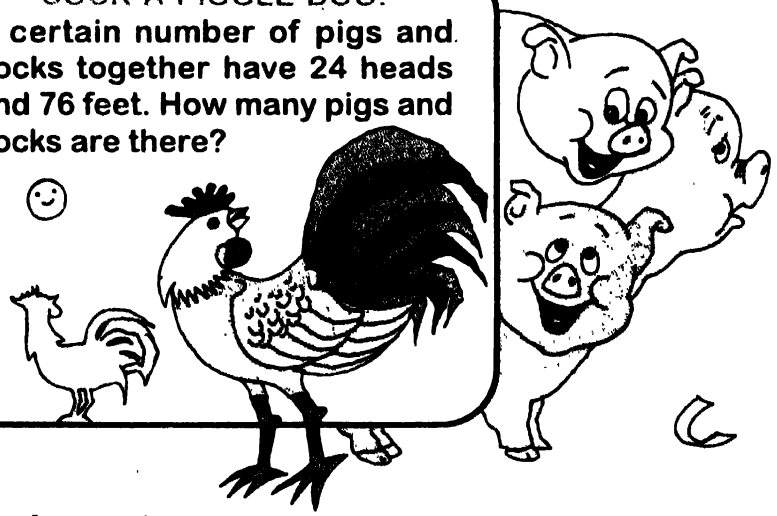
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Color this picture and send to:
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FUNTIME

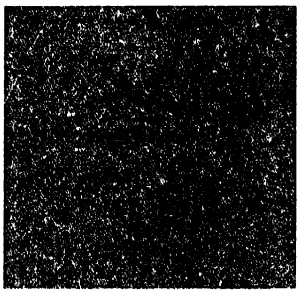
COCK-A-PIGGLE-DOO!

A certain number of pigs and cocks together have 24 heads and 76 feet. How many pigs and cocks are there?



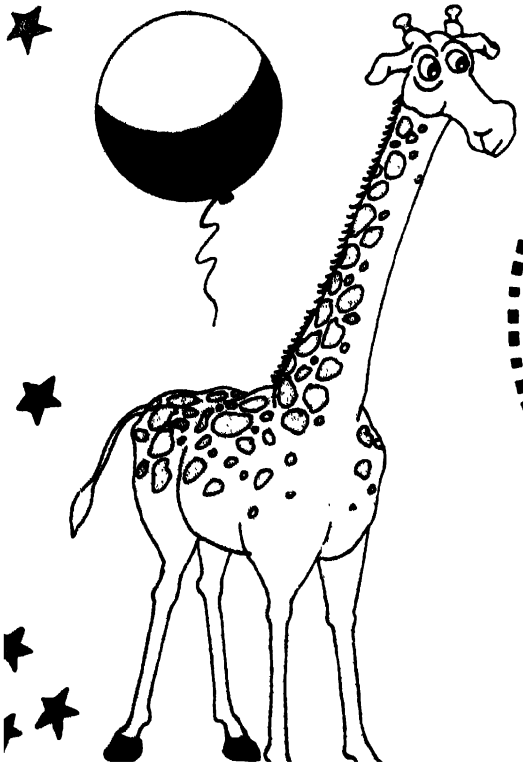
FAIR AND SQUARE

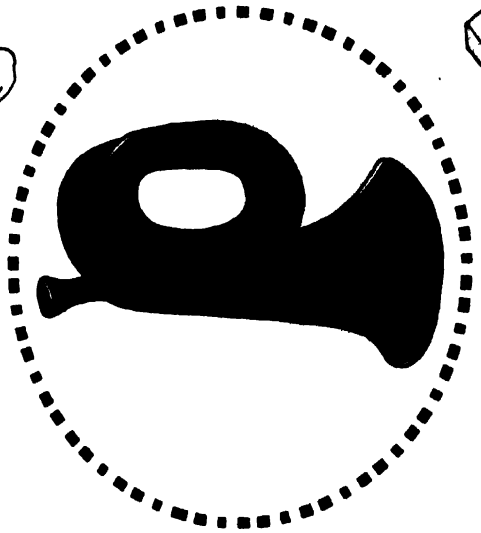
Make six squares within one square.

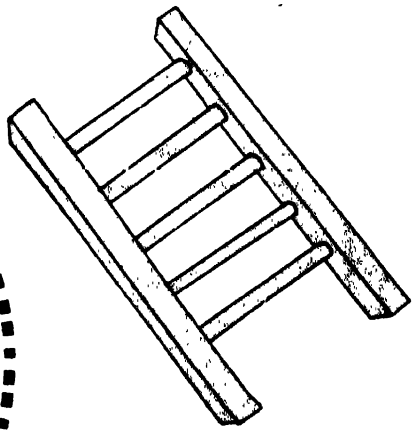


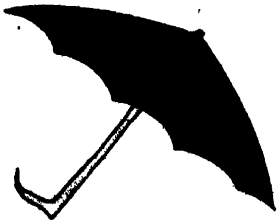
WHAT AM I?

Take the first letter from the name of each object to find the name of the musical instrument.







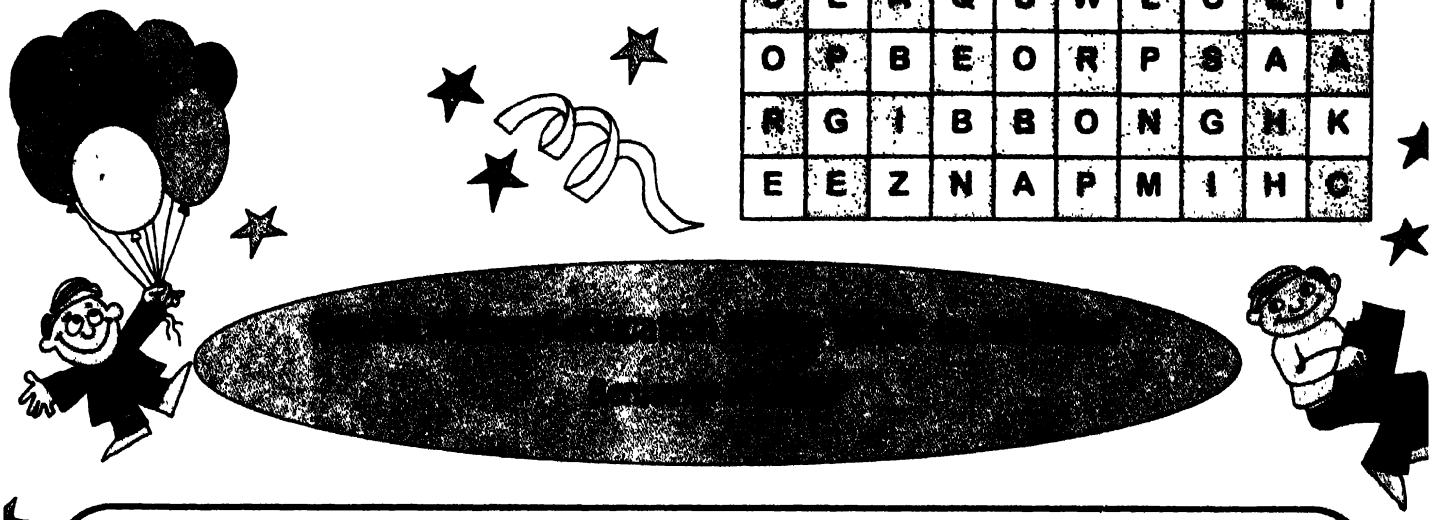


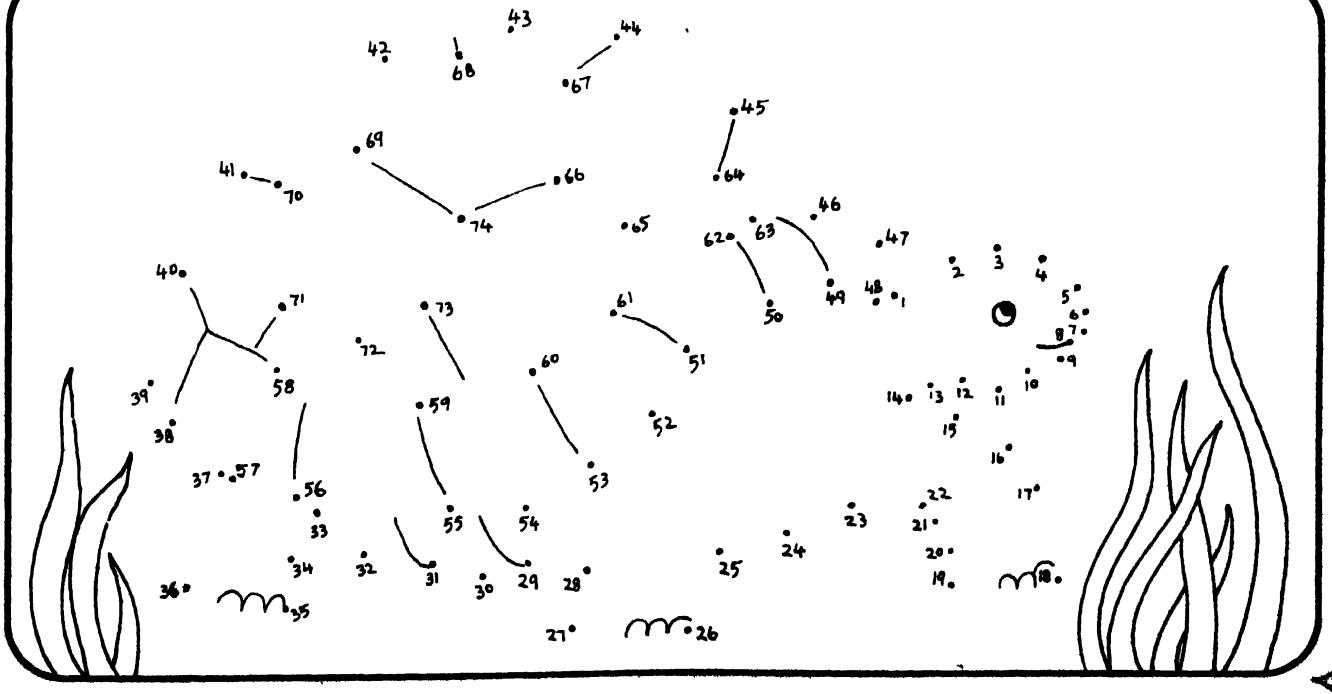


JUNGLE MAZE

Fourteen animals are hidden in the jungle of letters. Look for them horizontally, vertically, diagonally, backward and forward.

E	A	N	E	Y	H	O	E	S	R
A	U	T	H	J	N	R	S	O	S
S	I	L	G	A	I	A	W	D	T
G	X	F	W	V	A	P	A	F	S
A	R	T	L	D	H	O	L	G	L
R	H	I	N	O	C	E	R	O	S
O	E	A	Q	U	W	L	U	E	Y
O	P	B	E	O	R	P	S	A	A
R	G	I	B	B	O	N	G	H	K
E	E	Z	N	A	P	M	I	H	C





DOTTY DISCOVERY

Join the dots, discover what is hidden in the picture, and colour it.

Answers next month



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A SERIAL STORY

CAPTAIN KYP



Story : Homagni Chaudhuri
Illustrations : Subir Roy

Part 1

ELEVEN-YEAR-OLD Amit worried that there would be no time for the football match. The winter days were short and the sun set earlier in Shillong, which was in the far east of the country. He went inside and asked his mother, "Is Debuda not coming?"

Mother was knitting a sweater with an intricate pattern. "Don't be impatient," she replied. "It is not yet four."

Amit returned to the long verandah that ran across the front of the bunglow. He sat down in a corner and stared at the gate. The Alsatian, Lizzy, sat by his side.

One of the chairs at the other end of the verandah was occupied by an elderly gentleman waiting to consult Dr. Ashish Roy, Amit's father. Dr. Roy was available from four in the evening but some patients, who did not have appointments, came early hoping for a free slot.

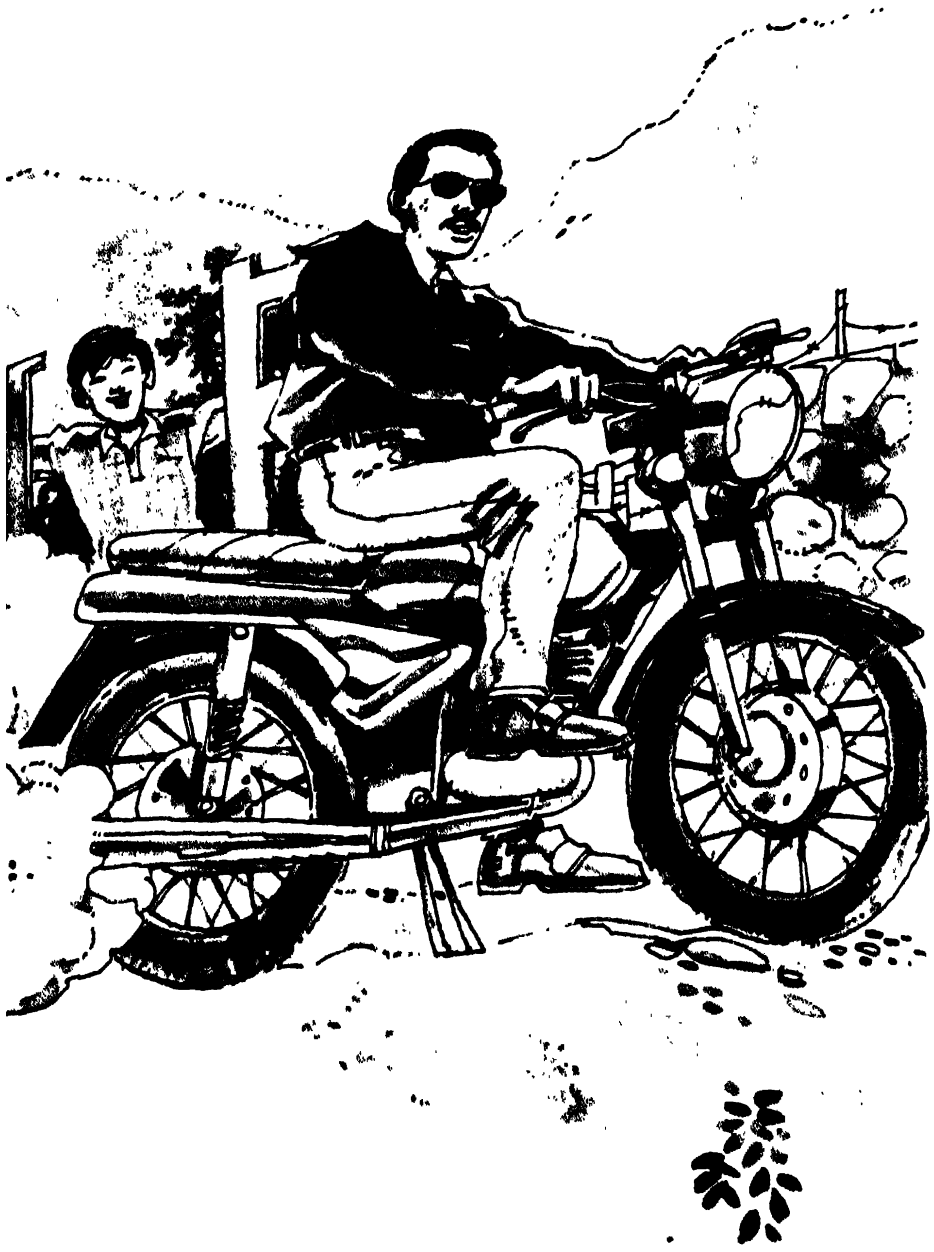
Flight Lieutenant Debashish De, on his Suzuki motor cycle, slowed at the Don Bosco Square and turned into Upland Road. It had been a long ride from the Officers' Mess at the far end of Shillong Peak, but he was now about to enter his aunt's house. He smiled expectantly.

Seeing the house, his smile widened. This was the classic style that he liked–not a concrete box but a wooden framed, independent, L-shaped bungalow standing on stone props. It was lightweight with walls of lime and sand plaster over thin bamboo reeds. The roof was corrugated tin sheets painted red and looked very nice against the four tall trees, *Pinus khasi*. The bungalow swayed with the earthquakes frequent in this region. The original capital of Assam, Cherra Punji, had buildings that were rigid structures, and was destroyed by an earthquake. Shillong became Assam's capital in 1874 and re-

mained so till 1974 when Meghalaya was formed as a separate state.

As Debashish's father worked in Calcutta, Debashish had stayed in his aunt's place for the last year of his school education. He was most welcome. He was very pleased to be posted on duty in Shillong now.

Amit heard the rumble of the Suzuki engine. He ran to open the gate. Debashish drove in with a flourish and parked his bike. As he climbed the two stairs to the verandah, Amrita, Amit's younger sister, came out. She was followed by her mother and grandmother. But Lizzy insisted on her right to head the reception. Yelping excitedly and lifting her front paws, she tried to climb over Debashish. Over the noise, Amit said accusingly, "Debuda, you're late."



"No, I'm not," replied Debashish. "It's just four. We can play for half an hour or more."

"Amit," said his Grandmother in a firm tone, "Debu must have tea first."

Debashish objected. "*Didu*," he said, "I'm not tired. Let me play football first. After playing I'll finish all your snacks."

Grandmother smiled and said, "We'll see."

Dr. Roy who had come out of his surgery said, "You must stay for dinner. I'll be free by eight." He rushed back.

The football game, Debashish versus Amit and Amrita, was played in the lawn. Stones marked the goal post. The ball was just a hard rubber one. Amrita was the goal-keeper. Soon Lizzy joined the game. She ran in and nosed the ball.

The game was exciting, but short. Fading light put a stop to it. Sweating, even though it was very cold, Amit said, "Amrita, you let in some easy shots."

"I had to play both back and goal," replied Amrita angrily. "You were no help at all."

Just then, they heard their mother call out, "Children, don't quarrel. The chocolate cake is on the table."

Amit and Amrita ran in. The

table was loaded with patties, chicken sandwiches, coconut savouries from Grandmother's vegetarian kitchen and, of course, the chocolate cake.

"How can I have all this and then dinner?" asked Debashish.

"In winter one needs more food," replied Grandmother. "And Ashish is bound to keep us waiting. His patients not only want medicines but also advice for whatever other problems they have."

Dr. Roy peeped in and said, "Two teas in the surgery, please. Biku has come and I've kept him waiting."

Mr. Bikash De was a frequent visitor. He came to have his blood pressure checked, and for a chat.

Lizzy appeared next. She was sent off with a biscuit. "Spoilt dog," said Grandmother. "But what can be expected? She comes from a long line of spoilt creatures."

"Why do you call them spoilt?" asked Debashish.

"Not only the dogs," insisted Grandmother. "Everyone in the family is spoilt. To begin with, they are all football-mad, even the girl."

"Let's move to the living room," suggested Mother, when tea was over.

"Amit," asked Debashish, "when does school start?"

"Monday."

"So soon?"

"Our new academic year always starts on the first Monday of March," explained Amit.



"And yours?" Debashish asked Amrita.

"On the sev..no, the eighth," replied Amrita.

"I'll play in the school Junior team," said Amit. "With Kyp as captain, we'll win the Khyrim Junior Football Cup."

All the Shillong schools, and some from outside, competed for the Khyrim Junior Cup. The tournament had started over forty years ago in Nongkrem, the cultural centre of Khyrim State and also of the entire Khasi Hills. When the number of participating schools increased, the competition had been moved to Shillong but the Khyrim Cup retained its name.

"I can't imagine *Dada's* team winning. I can dribble past him any time," said Amrita.

"Who is Kyp?" asked Debashish.

"Kyp is my classmate," replied Amit. "He is older than me—not yet thirteen, which is the cut-off age for the tournament. He is one of the best players in school. He can dodge past the big boys and can kick very hard. He plays centre-forward and positions the ball for scoring. Captain Kyp, we call him."

"Captain Kyp," said Debuda, "sounds like Captain Blood, the pirate. I must watch the Captain and you winning the Khyrim Cup final."

Dr. Roy was not too late and they sat for dinner at eight-thirty. They had a sumptuous dinner—vegetarian dishes from Grandmother's kitchen, and tiger prawns made by Mother.

*

Amit ate his breakfast quickly. "Don't gobble your food," said Mother. "What's the hurry?"

"School," replied Amit through a mouthful of food.

Mother laughed. It was only eight. There was an hour to go before Assembly and it took twenty minutes, at the most, to walk to school.

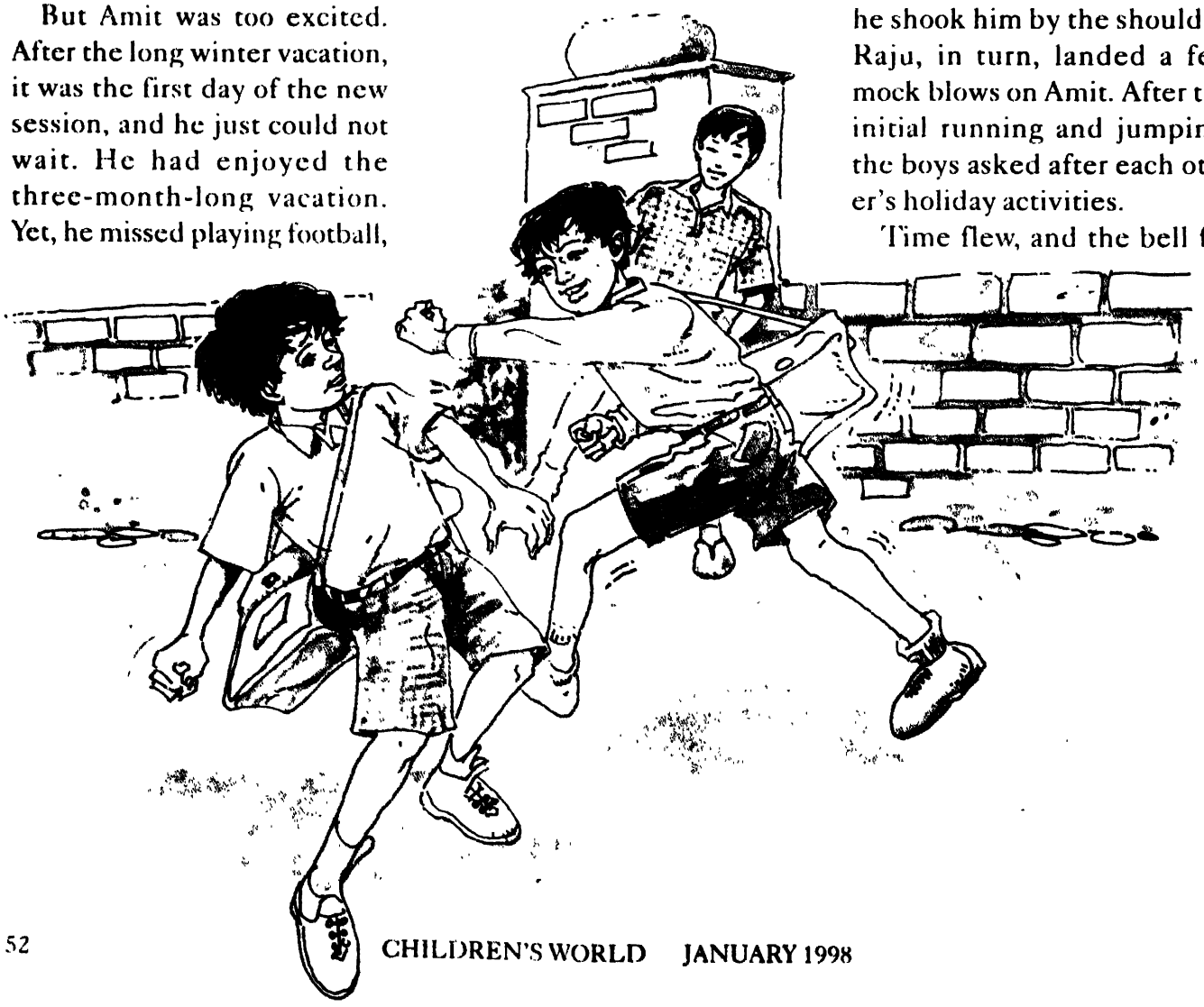
But Amit was too excited. After the long winter vacation, it was the first day of the new session, and he just could not wait. He had enjoyed the three-month-long vacation. Yet, he missed playing football, that is, proper football with a leather ball and eleven players in each team, and the opportunity to shoulder charge an opposing player. He wanted to be certain of inclusion in the school under-thirteen team. If they won the Khyrim Cup, it would be the first win for Umkhrah school.

Amit also missed his gang. Lambor did live near by, but two could not play 'cops and robbers' or other team games. Raju's house was in Umpling, about three kilometres away, and Amit was not allowed alone that far—not even with Lambor. Kyp stayed equally far, in a make-shift colony by the side of a small stream behind the fruit garden, an area that was strictly out-of-bounds for Amit.

As Amit finished his breakfast, Lambor walked in. He, too, was in a hurry to reach school. The two boys, half walking, half running, reached the school gate in ten minutes. They were very early, but Raju and many other friends were already there.

Lambor charged towards Raju with the idea of wrestling with him but remembered that this was school and it was necessary to remain neat. Instead, he shook him by the shoulder. Raju, in turn, landed a few mock blows on Amit. After the initial running and jumping, the boys asked after each other's holiday activities.

Time flew, and the bell for



Assembly rang. But Kyp had still not come.

Class Six sat down. Mr. Mitra, the class teacher, came in and took the roll call. Only Kyp was missing. In the end, Mr. Mitra asked, "Does anyone know about Kyp?"

No one did. Kyp was very popular but his friends did not visit him at his home. Two years ago, with the death of his mother, he became an orphan and was looked after by his aunt. She had a large family and was not well off. Kyp, who had been in Umkhrah School from the nursery, was given a scholarship. He did not pay tuition fees and his text books and notebooks were free. Though not brilliant, Kyp was a satisfactory student. The teachers liked him and thought him to be a good child.

Kyp excelled in football. He had total control over the ball. He planned for goals and distributed the passes. He was very friendly, disliked bullies, and defended the smaller boys. The sports master was sure that with Kyp as captain, the Umkhrah team would win the Khyrim Junior Cup.

The Principal of Umkhrah High School was Mr. Peter Lyngdoh. A man of integrity, he had resigned his job in the Electricity Board on a matter of principle. There were offers of consultancy from far and near but Mr. Lyngdoh chose to join Umkhrah High School as the Physics teacher. Two years later, he became Principal.

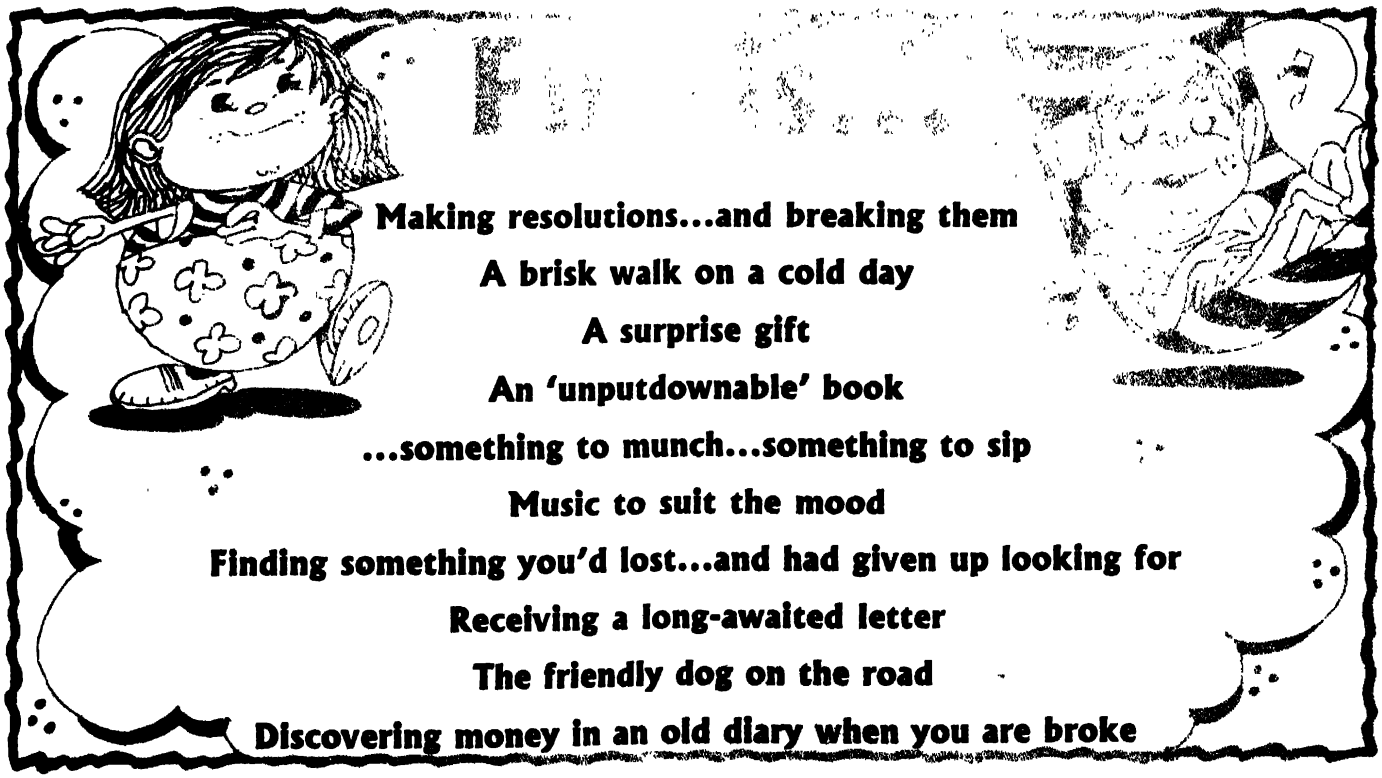
Under Mr. Lyngdoh's guidance, the school achieved high standards in studies and sports, and acquired a solid reputation for character building.

A week passed, but there was no sign of Kyp. Everyone was worried about the missing captain. Lambor and Raju wanted to visit Kyp's house. They knew their parents would not like them going there but that was not what stopped them. What stopped them was that they did not know the exact address. Amit had once gone to Kyp's home but he did not remember the way.

On Monday morning, Amit asked the class teacher, "Sir, is there any news of Kyp?"

"He has left school," replied Mr. Mitra in a tone which forbade further questioning.

(To be continued)





Here's a quiz to perk you up. Send in your entries and if your answers are correct, you may win one of our two prizes—of Rs. 100/- each. Each entry must be accompanied by your subscription number or with a cheque for a year's subscription. Children upto 16 years may participate. Include your name, age, address and the name of your school. Last date for receiving entries: *February 1, 1998*. You could also fax your entries to us at 11-3721090.

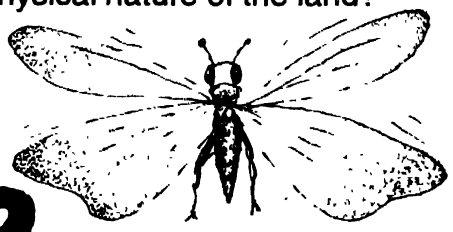
By Mudita Luthra







1. What is a young rabbit called?
2. What is the original name of the pop singer Madonna?
3. Which is the world's 'Bread Basket'?
4. What is the name given to trees that form seeds and pollen in cones?
5. Which is the instrument used for recording the intensity and origin of earthquakes?
6. Where is the 'Land of the midnight sun'?
7. What metals make up the alloy bronze?
8. What country was discovered by a Norwegian, named by a German, after an Italian?
9. Which toy is named after the American President, Theodore Roosevelt?
10. What lines are used when maps are designed to show the physical nature of the land?
11. Which was the first disease to be defeated by vaccination?
12. What well-known everyday object did Walter Hunt invent?
13. Which insect has the largest wing-span?
14. From which country does the art of Bonsai originate?
15. Which part of a flower protects it while it is a bud?
16. Why do dandelions fluff up?
17. Which animal can run the fastest?
18. Which is the longest river in the world?
19. Which is the smallest bone in the human body?
20. When was Children's Day celebrated for the first time?





CW Bonanza! At the end of twelve issues, there will be a Special Bumper Prize drawn by lot from among the 24 winners of the year. So come on, folks! Get cracking!
No all-correct entries for Bingo, November 1997.

Answers to Bingo, November, 1997

1. In Denmark 2. Western winds in the 40–50° South latitudes 3. Venus 4. John Pemberton (USA) 5. District of Columbia 6. 246–210 B.C 7. Bhanu Athaiyya 8. Jurassic Park 9. Alexander Gustav Eiffel, 1889 10. NEFA (North East Frontier Agency) 11. Cuttack 12. Cuba 13. Study of flags 14. Aristotle 15. Barcelona, Spain 16. Nicobar Islands 17. Symbolised and stylised Japanese drama 18. Kal Baisaki 19. The Oxford English dictionary with 20 volumes and 21,728 pages 20..Damodar and Hoogly

Ninety-Eight Down the Ages

Trudi Dip

It is 1998, two years from the twenty-first [illegible] what did the '98s [illegible]

IN CLASSICAL TIMES, in 98 AD, Trajan, the General commanding Roman armies in Germany, became Emperor of Rome.

In 598 AD the great mathematician, Brahmagupta, was born in India. Brahmagupta wrote *Brahmasphuta-siddhanta* when he was only 30, and developed the concept of [illegible] or zero.

Nothing remarkable happened in the '98s of the next three centuries. Then in 998 Mahmud, Turkish ruler of Ghazni, founded an empire in northern India and eastern Afghanistan.

Stephen I became the first King of Hungary.

In 1098 St. Robert founded the first Cistercian monastery at Citeaux, France.

The Crusaders defeated the Saracens (Muslims) at Antioch.

Otto IV became the Holy Roman Emperor in 1198 while Innocent III became the Pope.

Edward I defeated Wallace at the battle of Falkirk and reconquered Scotland in 1298.

Albert I became the Holy Roman Emperor (till 1308), following the defeat and death of Adolf at the battle of Gollheim.

The Mongol chief, Dwarkesh Khan, crossed the river Indus and [illegible] was the largest army to [illegible] was formed the short-lived [illegible] Sultans of Delhi.

to Aurangzeb after an eight-year siege.

Calcutta was born! Prince Azam Shah, *subedar* of Bengal and grandson of Emperor Aurangzeb, authorized the East India Company to purchase three villages, Kalikata, Sutanati and Gobindapur for Rs. 12,000. These three villages formed the nucleus of the city that went on to become the first capital of the British Empire and, after independence, the capital of West Bengal.

1798 saw the French occupy Rome and establish the Roman Republic. They invaded Switzerland and set up the Helvetic Republic. Napoleon Bonaparte led the French army on an expedition against Egypt. Cairo was taken by the French. At the Battle of the Nile at Aboukir Bay, the British fleet under Horatio Nelson defeated the French.

In India, the Company *Raj* strengthened itself further. In 1798 Allahabad fort was made over to the East India Company and a permanent maintenance of 10,000 troops was agreed upon. The Nizam of Hyderabad concluded a Treaty of Subsidiary Alliance with the British.

But there were two occurrences of greater significance. The publication of the book *Lyrical Ballads* by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and that of *An Essay on the Principle of Population* by Thomas Robert Malthus. Wordsworth and Coleridge were Romantic poets inspired by the beauty of nature and love of mankind. Malthus was a clergyman warning the world that unless man took due precautions, population would outstrip food supply and lead to war, famine and pestilence. Both the works were products of their times, of the Industrial Revolution Britain was then going through.

Lithography was invented in 1798 by Aloys Senefelder.

A year of major scientific and technological breakthroughs was 1898. The French scientist couple Pierre Curie and Marie Curie discovered radium. Rudolf Diesel invented the Diesel engine.

The Spanish-American War over Cuba took place. Cuba gained independence while Puerto Rico and other Pacific possessions of Spain were ceded to the USA. The USA also annexed the Hawaiian islands.

China ceded Port Arthur to Russia, and went through Hundred Days of Reform.

The Social Democratic Party was founded in Russia.

Sister Nivedita arrived in India. An Irish lady of Scottish descent, named Margaret Elizabeth Nobel, she was inspired by Swami Vivekananda to devote herself to social service. On March 25, she was initiated into *brahmacharya* by Vivekananda. On December 9, Belur Math, the primary unit of the Ramakrishna Mission, was consecrated at Belur in West Bengal.

The Society for the Protection of Children, Calcutta, was established.

Indian music was first produced on gramophone records in Calcutta in the Beliaghata factory of Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd.

Syed Ahmad Khan who started a revival of Urdu as the language of Muslims in India, died. He established the Aligarh Muhammedan Anglo-Oriental School at Aligarh in 1875, which later became the Aligarh Muslim University.

Mrs. Annie Besant established the Central Hindu College at Varanasi. This formed the nucleus of the Benares Hindu University.

Damodar Hari Chapekar was hanged in Yervada Central Jail on April 18, 1898. He had shot at Charles Rand, Plague Commissioner, and Ayerst, District Magistrate of Pune, in June 1897—this was the first terrorist act in India.

All this happened in the past. What will 1998 bring? Let us try—each in our own way—to make it worth a mention in 2098.

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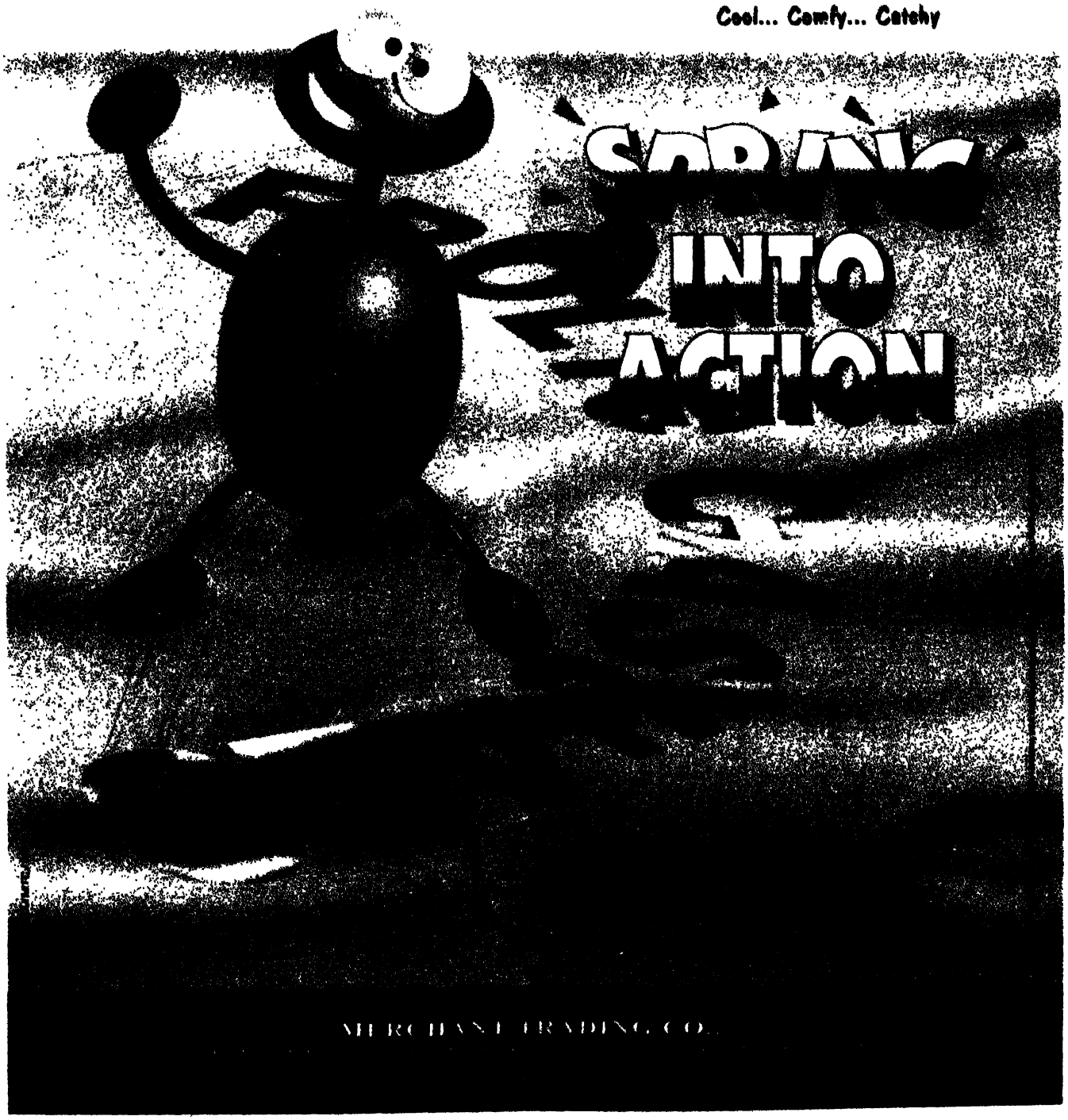


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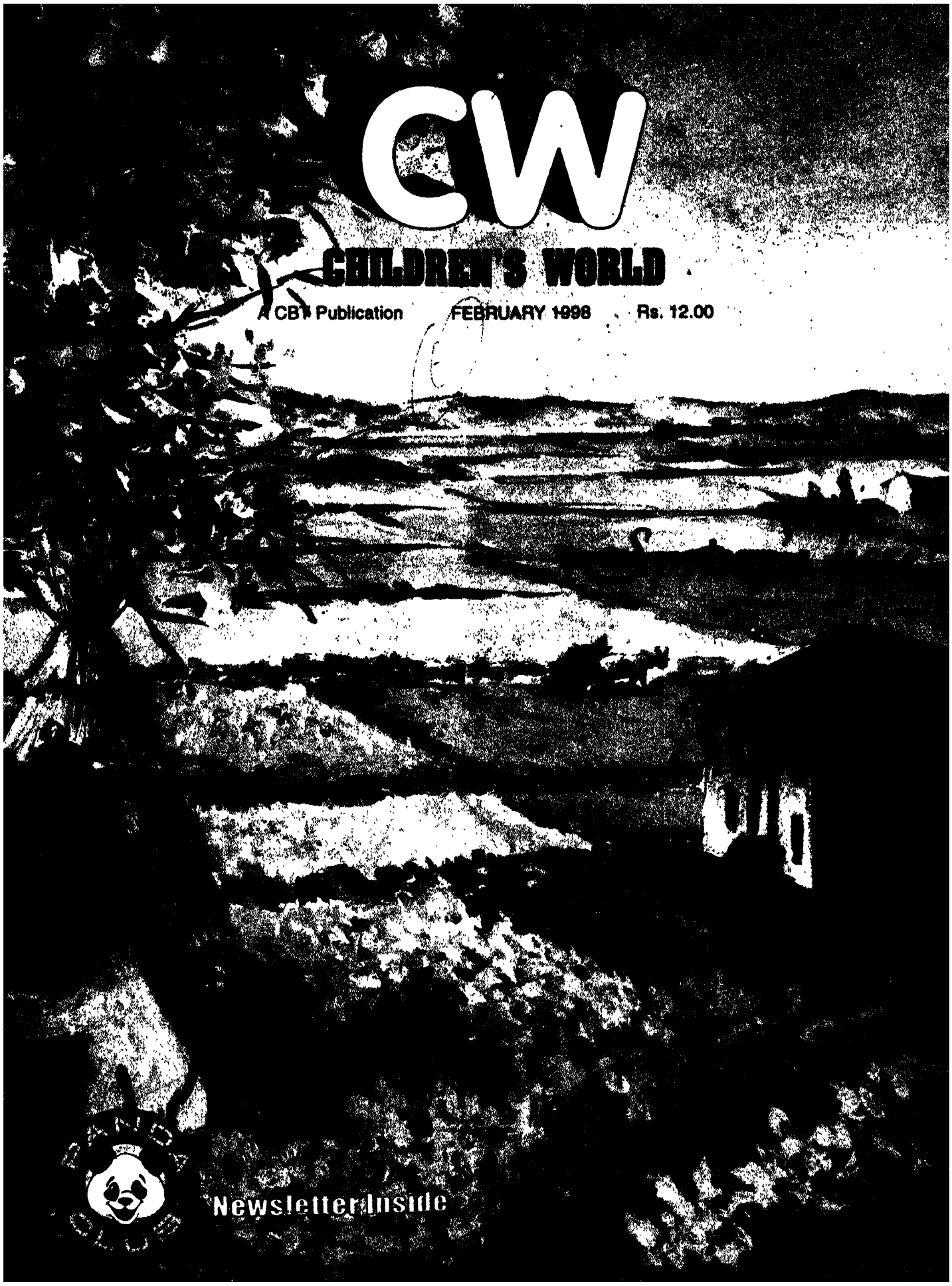


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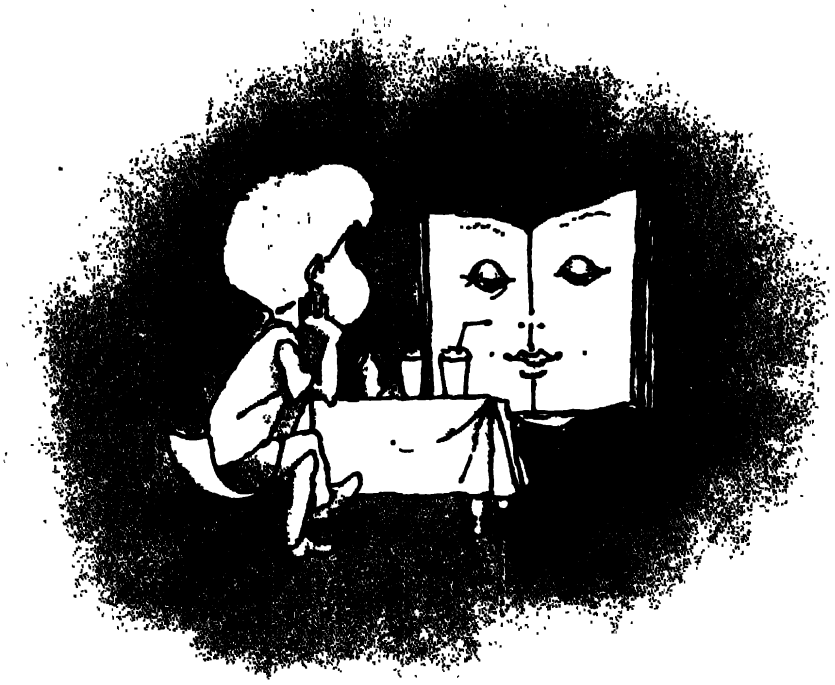
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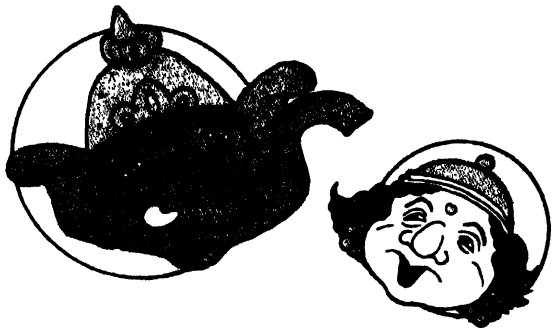
Bingo
COMPETITION

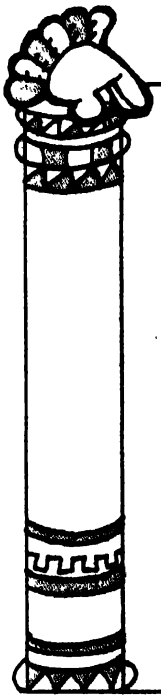
A Day in the Life of a Science Student
Mansi Narang

The Month That Was...
NEWS UPDATE
Geeta Menon



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Cover: Prithvishwar Gayen

Dear Readers,

Spring. Yellow. Green. Sunlight. Optimism. Ever noticed how a combination of the first four add up to the fifth? Not only for us but for all beings. There's a liveliness that comes over you, and you want to jump and leap and smile—just like that. Life is good.

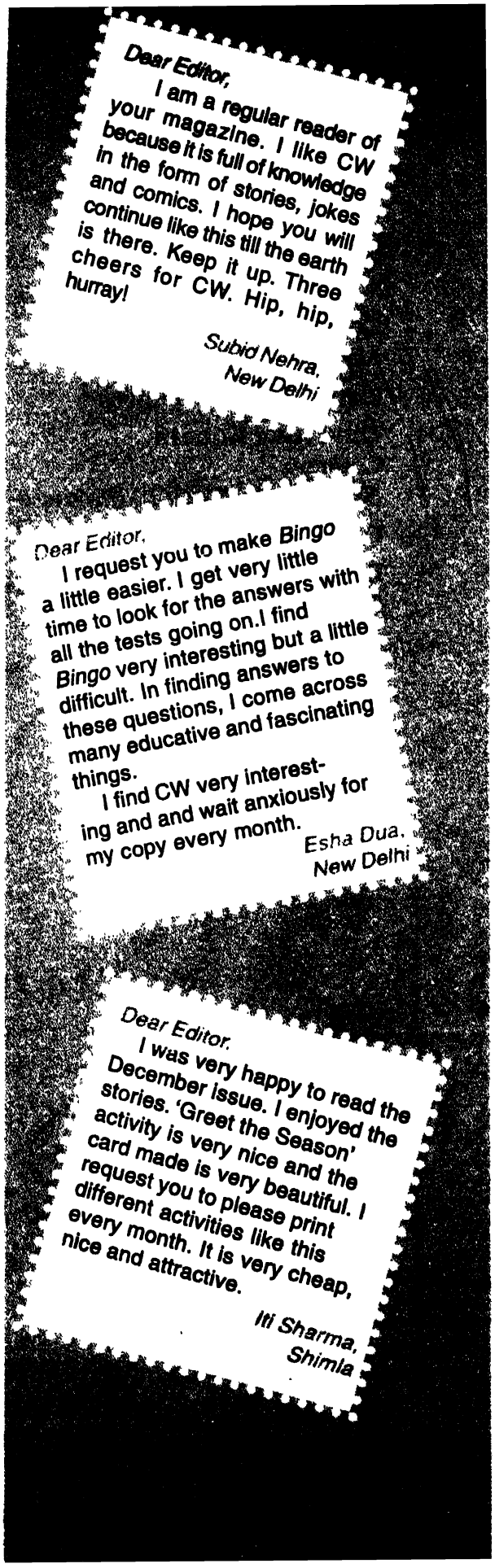
This spring, when everything seems possible, may I pass on a thought to you? Once every year, on any festival or important day, drop a bad habit and cultivate a good one. A bad habit could be something as small as biting your nails, just as a good habit as insignificant as putting away your things after use. Not very difficult when you are determined, is it? If you start today, in ten years you would be rid of ten bad traits, which is a gain by itself. In addition you would be richer by ten desirable traits—virtues so to say. Both ways you stand to win.

February 28 is National Science Day, the birthday of C. V. Raman, scientist and Nobel laureate. He would probably identify with the sentiments expressed in 'A Day in the Life of a Science Student', as he would with Piklu in 'Piklu and the UFO'.

Now for a shocking and sad matter brought to our notice by Aranyaka of Mother's International School. The poem 'Jungle Justice', published in our November issue, was replicated from 'Interactive English 4', published by Macmillan. As you grow older, you will realize that many of life's actions are based on trust. We published the poem in good faith. We will go on from here, planning how best to avoid such unhappy incidents, but what of the supposed 'author'? Surely she read the rules of the competition which asked for ORIGINAL entries? It is always tempting to take the easy but wrong way, yet it is these little things that shape the character of a person...and finally of society.

You must be settling down to serious study. Make a special effort to do extra well. Surprise yourself. Success can become a habit. Your habit. All the best.

Bhavana Nair



Dear Editor,

I am a regular reader of your magazine. I like CW because it is full of knowledge in the form of stories, jokes and comics. I hope you will continue like this till the earth is there. Keep it up. Three cheers for CW. Hip, hip, hurray!

Subid Nehra,
New Delhi

Dear Editor,

I request you to make *Bingo* a little easier. I get very little time to look for the answers with all the tests going on. I find *Bingo* very interesting but a little difficult. In finding answers to these questions, I come across many educative and fascinating things.

I find CW very interesting and and wait anxiously for my copy every month.

Esha Dua,
New Delhi

Dear Editor,

I was very happy to read the December issue. I enjoyed the stories. 'Greet the Season' activity is very nice and the card made is very beautiful. I request you to please print different activities like this every month. It is very cheap, nice and attractive.

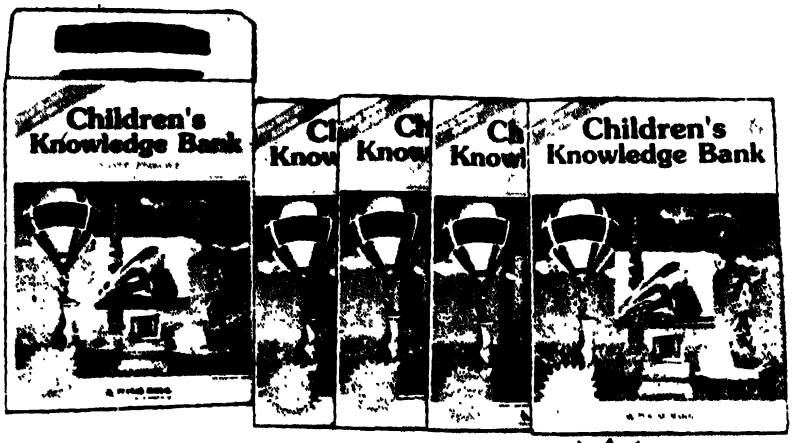
Iti Sharma,
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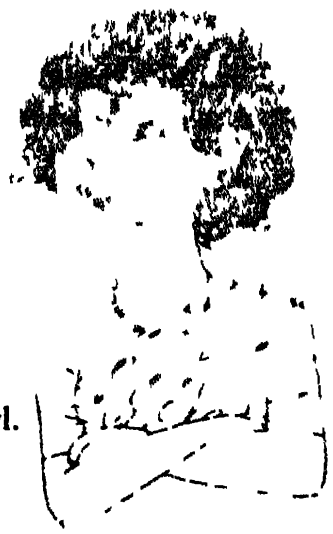
A LETTER TO YOU

Dear tidynesses and pigstydinesses,
It's again that terrible time of year
When my mother looms up without warning
And yanks me painfully by the ear.

"Look!" she shouts, "look at this room
Is it a barn, a stable or a sty?
A place which cyclones love and live in?
To which the God of tidyness has said goodbye?"

I see nothing wrong in my room
A confused bed, the pillow under a chair
Shoes on the table, paints on the floor
And my books and diaries everywhere

"Tidy it up!" she thunders, "tidy it now
Pick up that pillow, clean that bed
Put away the paints and the mess on the floor
As for your shoes... wear them on your head."



"But..." I stammer, feeling cyclone-hit myself.
She ignores me totally, as I know she will
"Your books on the table," she yells, "and your diaries
...Your diaries make me ill...

"And sick. ." she says with hardly a pause
"I don't want to see them here at all.
Chuck them out, burn them, bury them
Boil them," she says; she makes my scalp crawl.

I stare sadly at my diaries after she leaves
They hold the secret of my long lost youth
They contain my thoughts, my deeds, my dreams
The history of my life, the strangeness, the truth.

How can I throw away such a treasure?
The record of what was, is and may be
The starting of a great autobiography
That will tell the world all about me.

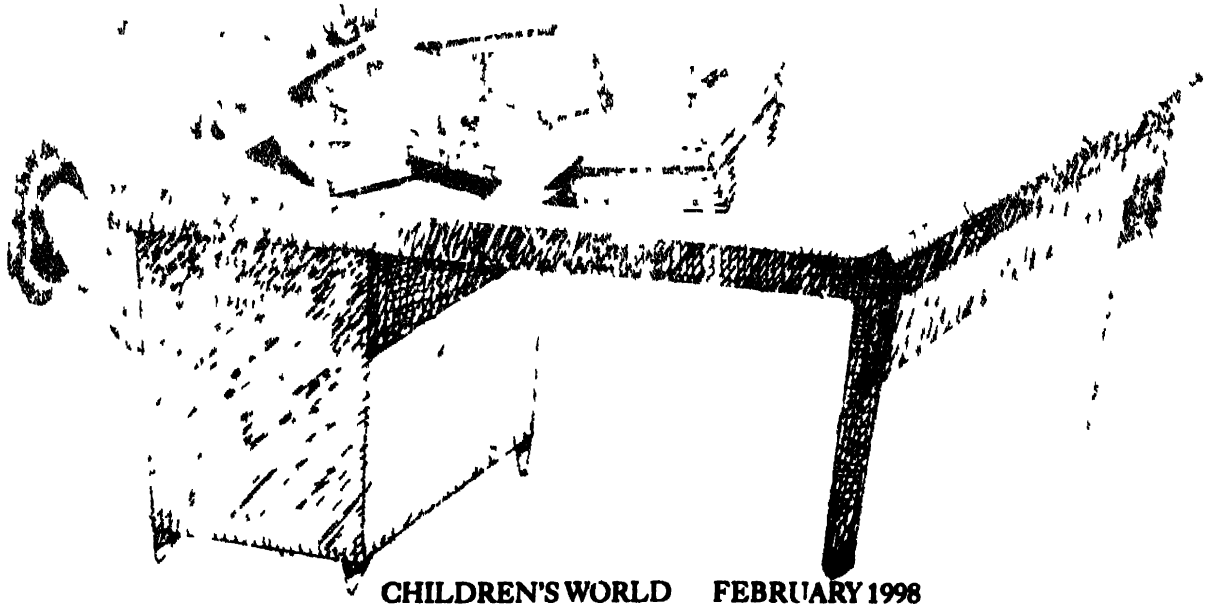
So I pick them up and hold them close
My poor diaries, all bound in red
I cannot chuck them out, not now, not ever
Even after millions of years, they will be read.



My cupboard's no use, it's full of clothes
There's no vacancy there anymore
It's the first place my mother will search
I've hidden my diaries there before.

Under my bed is no use either
The maid is sure to find them there
Her broom seems to have a radar beam
That instantly locates any hidden lair.

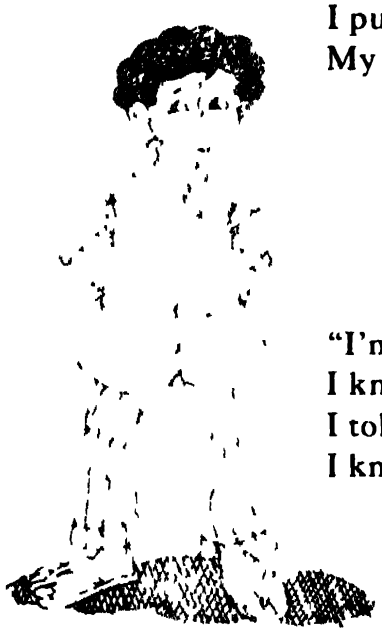
The top of my table is far too bare
Its drawers are really too small
My diaries are not just one or two
The last I counted, there were twenty-six in all.

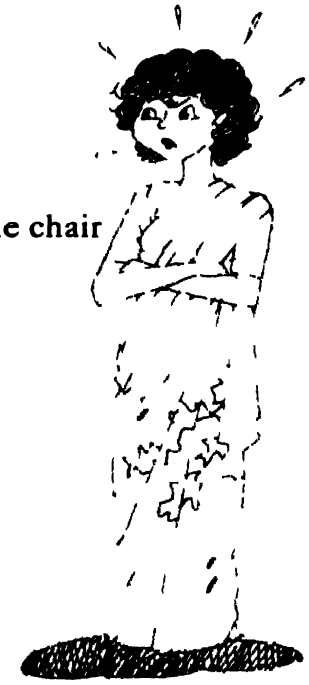


Quick, oh quick, where do I put them this time?
Where can they survive another year?
I stumble around, looking, thinking
My heart pounds, is that my mother I hear?

And then, at last, I find a solution
I roll up the mattress into a long bump
And on the cot's board, I lay out my gems
In sixes and sevens, with not a lump.

Then I unroll the mattress back in place
And spread the sheet out very neat
I put away my books, my paints, my pens
My mother's at the door, my heart skips a beat.



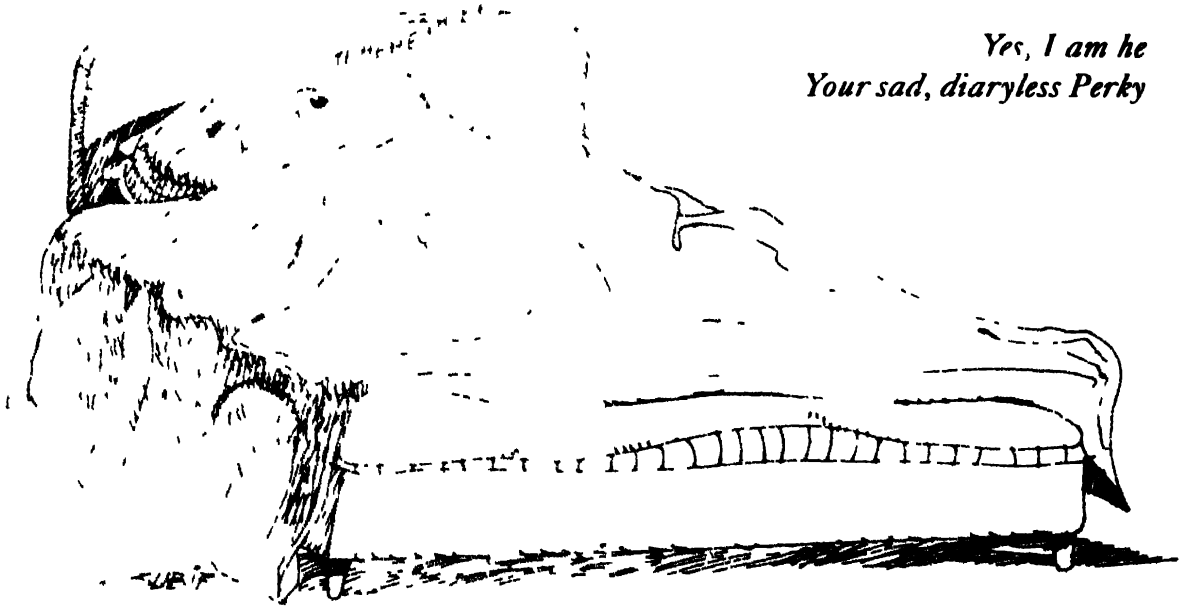


She walks in sideways, just like a spy
She searches the cupboard and under the chair
She stares at my table, into the drawers
She's puzzled, but I know she's fair.

"I'm so pleased," she says at last, "so proud
I knew, I knew you'd throw them away
I told your father, I can trust you to obey,
I knew you'll finally see it my way."

I grin, what else can I do?
My diaries are safe for another year.
I grin and blush, a bit too soon
She says, "Why is your bed looking so funny, dear?"

Yes, I am he
Your sad, diaryless Perky





PIKLU and the UFO

Bhattacharjee

"THAT, OVER there, is the Great B[illegible]. Can you make out a[ll] the seven stars? There, up there, is the Orion—what we call the *Kalpurush*..."

Grandpa was showing billion-year-old stars to nine-year-old Piklu. Piklu followed Grandpa's outstretched hand, his index finger darting from star to star, planet to planet. Here in Shaktigarh, far away from the neon lights of Calcutta, countless stars shone like jewels in the black velvet of the sky. But Piklu was not looking at the stars. He was looking for UFOs.

Many do not believe that people from space come to visit Earth on dish-shaped spacecrafts called Unidentified Flying Objects or UFOs. But Piklu was sure that UFOs were not just stories. 'The sky is so huge,' he always thought, 'and there are so many things in it. Why can't there be people in other solar systems? And why can't they come and visit us?'

Piklu kept an old pair of binoculars in the bottom drawer of his study table. He often scanned the night sky with them through his window. He was sure that if he looked long enough and hard [illegible] one day.

That was why Piklu [illegible] come to Shaktigarh to spend a week of his summer vacation with Grandpa. In the city, the night sky looked like a piece of torn, faded cloth. In Shaktigarh, a small town, the sky was like deep blue velvet, sparkling with stars, planets, and meteors. In six days, Piklu had counted seven meteors falling through the sky.

But no UFOs. Piklu stood on the roof till his neck ached, till Grandpa started scolding him. "Five more minutes, Grandpa," Piklu would say and search the horizon for the

last time. No flying discs with twinkling lights. No strange lights flashing past. Nothing. The stars winked at him from above. Below, among the dark, inky bushes of the garden, hundreds of glow-worms darted about.

Piklu loved his evenings in Shaktigarh. But he hated the mornings, especially breakfast. Oh, he loved the hot *puris* and *aloo* curry all right. It was just that Ranjanbabu, a neighbour, came everyday to have tea with Grandpa. And the moment Ranjanbabu saw Piklu, he would ask, "How much is 46 times 284?" As Piklu tried desperately to do the sum in his head, Ranjanbabu would show all his betel-stained teeth and chant, "You can't do it, you can't. You lose, you lose! Try this: if 343 eggs are divided among seven boys, how many will be left?"

Piklu could see that Grandpa felt sorry for him. "Come on, Ranjan," he would say. "Let the boy finish his food. He is not so strong in sums."

These words pained Piklu more than anything else. He wanted Grandpa to be proud of him. But Piklu could never add numbers in his head in a jiffy.

The night Grandpa showed Piklu the Orion was his last in Shaktigarh. After dinner, as he lay on the bed, Piklu's heart was heavy. 'I haven't seen a single UFO,' he thought. 'Will I ever see one? Will I ever meet people from outer space?'

Grandpa had closed the window beside the bed. "Night air can be dangerous," he had said. But Piklu opened the window wide. 'I will look at the sky all night,' he thought. Pillow under chest, he looked at the square piece of sky he could see from his window.

"You should've looked down, not up."

Piklu jumped up. He had dropped off, but was now wide awake. What was that voice? Did he hear it in his dream?

"No, it's me."

Piklu's hair stood on end. The voice was very unlike any other he had ever heard. And it was somewhere very near.

His head still muddled with sleep, Piklu looked hard around the darkened room. All he could see were some glow-worms that had come in through the open window. They were darting about, weaving ever-disappearing patterns of light in the dark. Only one little dot of warm green light, saw Piklu, was glowing steadily. It did not





blink like others. As [he] watched, it moved slowly [in] circles just above the mosq[uito] net. Surely, no glow-worm could do that.

"Of course, they can't. You're seeing a UFO."

'I must be dreaming,' thought Piklu, and pinched himself hard.

"Ouch! Don't do that. It hurts!" said the voice.

Now Piklu was more curious than afraid.

"How do you know it hurts?" he asked.

"I can feel what you feel, can't I? Otherwise, would I be here?"

At last, Piklu could make out why the voice was strange. It was not a voice he heard with his ears. The voice was inside his head. Piklu managed to blurt out, "Who are you?"

"Your UFO. Or your friend. Have it as you will." The voice inside Piklu's head laughed again.

"How can a UFO be so small? How many of you can fit into so small a machine."

"There's only me, silly," said the voice. "I'm the person, I'm the machine. When we travel, we travel by ourselves. We don't need fancy, huge, fire-spitting machines."

"But...but you are only a light! A tiny dot!" cried Piklu.

"I can be smaller. I can be bigger too. Want to see?"

Suddenly the room was bathed in cool, green light—light that danced and waved and rippled. Brilliant streaks of emerald, sea green, bottle green swirled before Piklu's eyes.

'It's as if I am swimming in a sea of light,' thought Piklu. His friend, as if sharing his thought, laughed merrily.

Then slowly the light started shrinking. Soon it was a tiny dot like before and the room was dark again.

"Is that all you are? A light?" asked Piklu.

"Sorry if you don't like me," the voice now sounded cross. "I came only because you wanted so much to see a UFO. Goodbye, then."

"Oh no, no!" cried Piklu. "Please don't go! I think you are wonderful. You're nothing on earth!"

"What did you expect?" The voice laughed again. "I am from a trillion light years away."

Piklu knew what a light-year was—the distance that light travels in one year at the speed of 186,000 miles a second—though he was not sure how many zeros went to make a trillion.

"Twelve," said the voice.

"Thanks," said Piklu. "Do you have to stay here, in Shaktigarh, or can you travel with me to Calcutta?"

"Oh, I must be home tonight. I can't stay."

Piklu was silent. What could he say to this strange friend,

this UFO-cum-alien, who travelled a trillion light years in one night? But his heart was heavy. It was so warm, so comforting to be talking to someone who knew his thoughts before he even spoke them aloud. Suddenly, the image of rows of flying machines and scary aliens talking in strange languages seemed ridiculous.

'My UFO is better than anything anyone has ever imagined,' thought Piklu. 'But now I'll lose him again. Forever.'

"Cheer up, please," the voice spoke. "I'll come back one day, I promise. And I'll leave you a gift."

"What gift?"

"You'll find out tomorrow. Now go to sleep."

The tiny dot of green light now flowed towards Piklu.

The glow-worm—no, the UFO—dissolved into a stream of light once again, this time going round and round Piklu's head. 'I must be looking like an angel with a green halo,' was the last thought in Piklu's mind before he fell into a deep, dreamless sleep.

The next morning, Piklu was late. It was Grandpa who woke him up.

"Hurry up, Piklu, your train leaves in two hours!" Piklu jumped up and ran to the bathroom. He brushed his teeth, splashed some water on his face and ran to the breakfast table. As usual, Ranjanbabu was there, sipping tea. Before Piklu could sit down, he shot his question, "How much is 96 times 125?"

"12,000."

It was Piklu who had answered the question. Just like that. No hard thought, no calculation.

Ranjanbabu's lower jaw hung loose, his eyes bulged from their sockets. Grandpa's hand shook and spilled some tea on to the saucer.

Piklu himself was no less surprised. How could he do the sum so fast, without multiplying the numbers or adding them in his head? The answer had just flashed in his mind, in letters of green neon light.

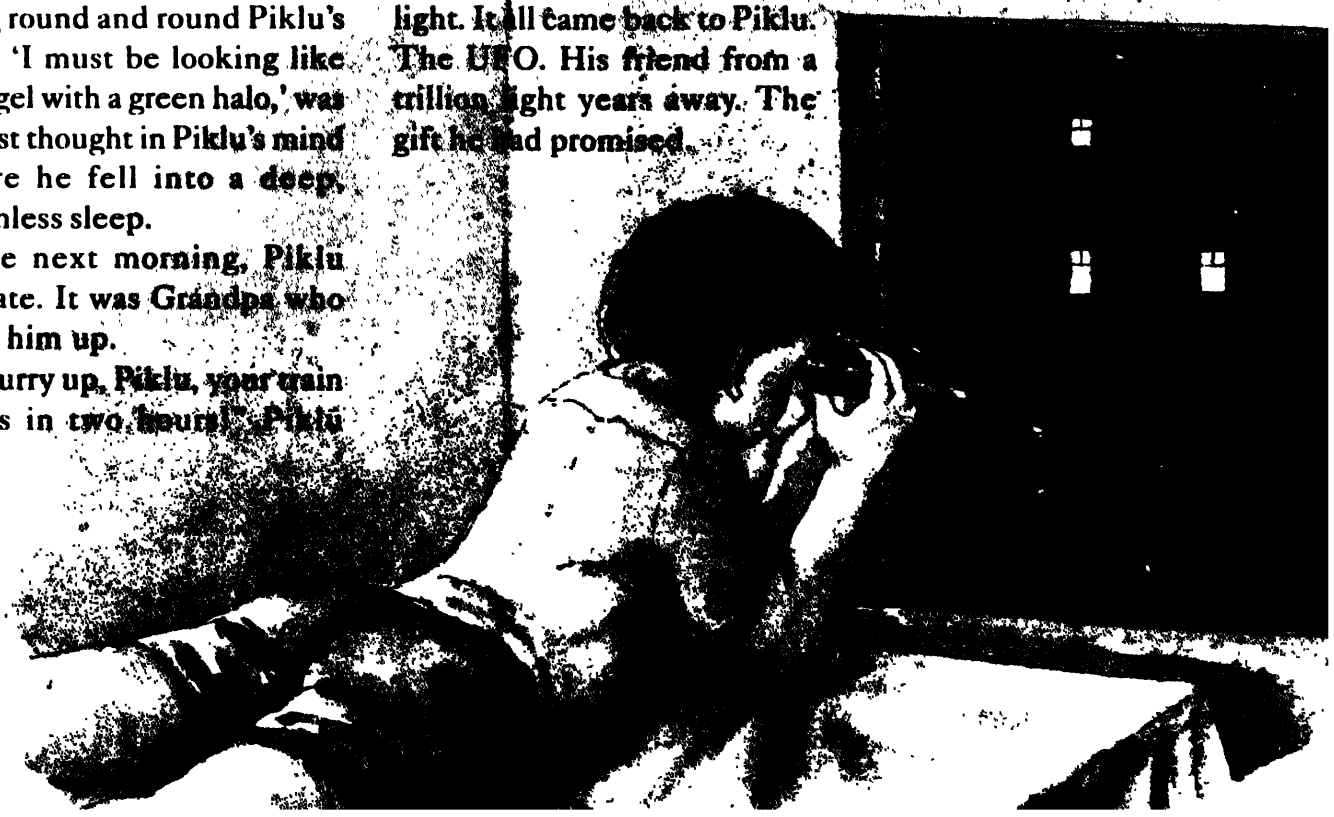
Green light. Green glowing light. It all came back to Piklu. The UFO. His friend from a trillion light years away. The gift he had promised.

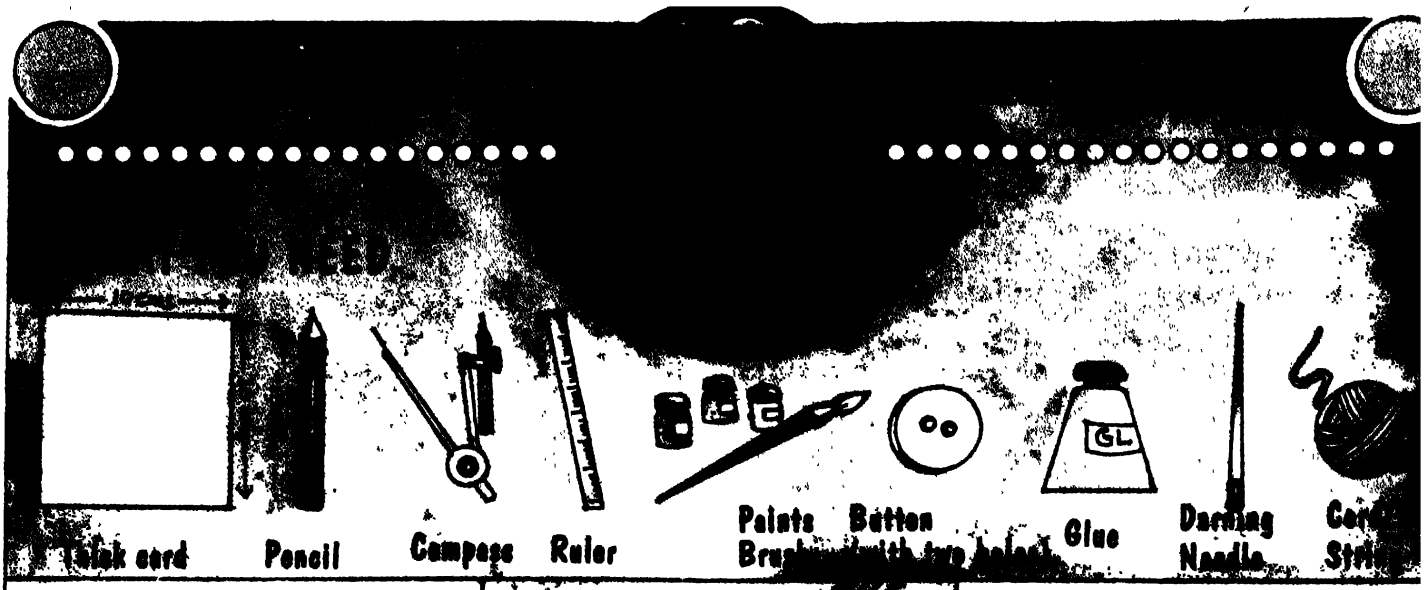
Piklu could not think for long. Ranjanbabu had recovered his breath.

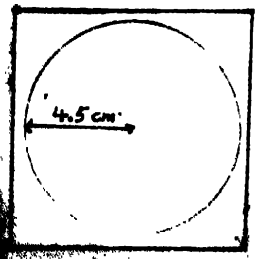
"How much is 1296 added to 3264... How many litres of milk must be added to 780 gms of water so that the ratio is 3:7...?"

Ranjanbabu threw question after question at Piklu. Like an expert batsman, Piklu hit each one neatly, scoring a six every time. At the end of five minutes, Grandpa was beaming a king-size smile and Ranjanbabu was wiping his brow.

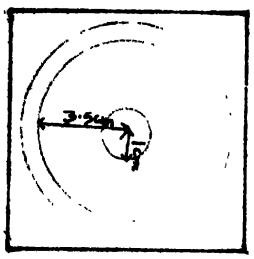
That night, Piklu was back in his room in Calcutta. He took out his binoculars to look out of the window. Only, this time, he was not looking at the sky, but at the glow-worms that could have been hiding among the marigolds in the garden. His friend had promised to come back, hadn't he?



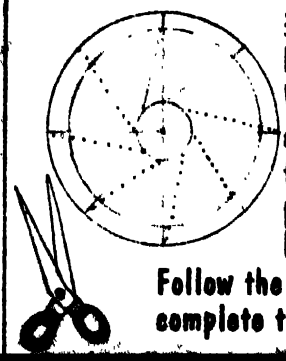




1. Draw a circle of 4.5 cm radius on thick card.



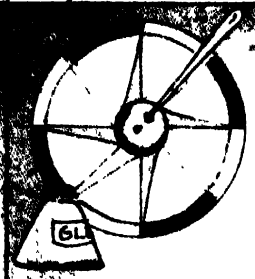
2. Draw two more concentric circles, 3.5cm and 1cm, inside the big one.



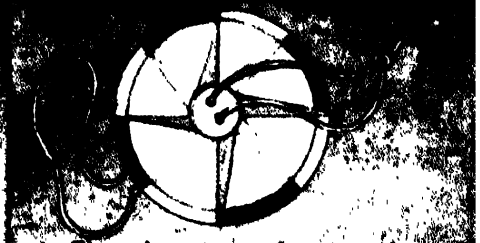
3. Cut out the big circle. With a pencil and ruler trace the star pattern onto both sides. Follow the dots to complete the star pattern.



4. Colour the areas as marked.



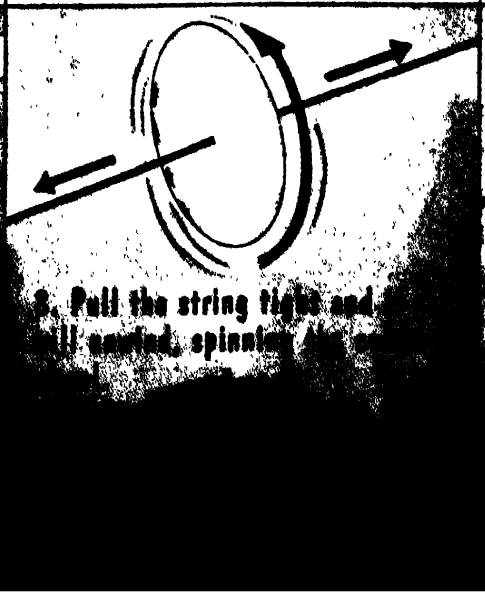
5. Fix the button with glue in the centre of one side. Pierce two holes in the card through the button holes.



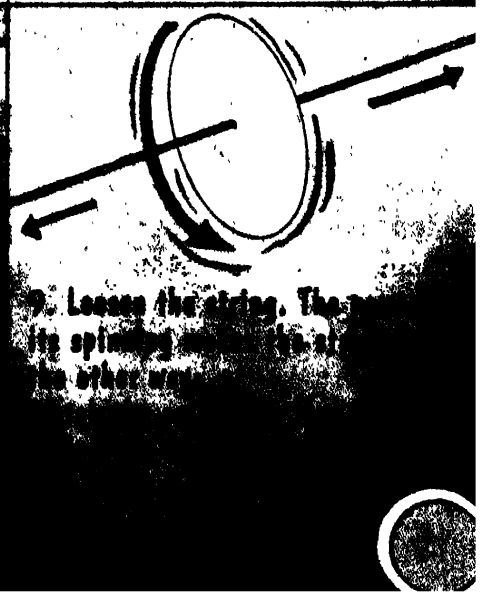
6. Thread a piece of string through the two holes and tie the ends together firmly.



7. Put your hands through the loops of string.



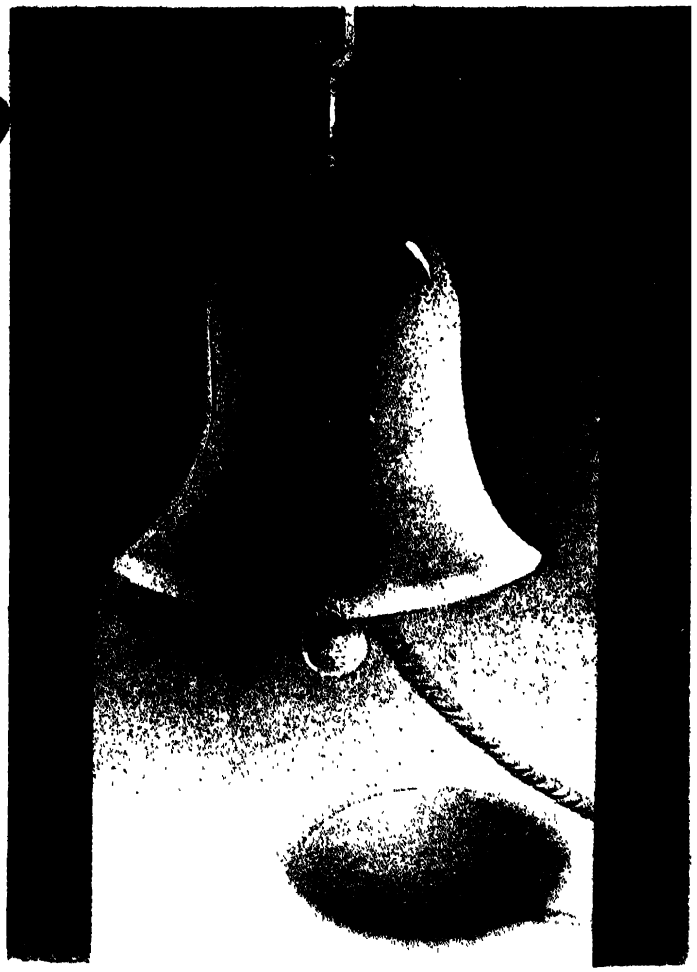
8. Pull the string tight and [illegible] spinning.



9. Loosen the string. The [illegible] its spinning [illegible] the other way.

A Cradle,

Mudita Luthra
Illustrations : Ajanta Guhathakurta



EVERY CHILD who comes into this world has the right to have a family. So do I.

My mother and father had desired a child. I was born. Within a few days, they felt that they could not take care of me. One early morning, before the sun rose, I was left at the doorstep of an adoption agency. My mother held me close to her chest one last time before leaving me in a cradle. I was scared, insecure and cold. I knew she was abandoning me. I cried out to her. She heard me, yet she didn't. A loud bell rang through the silent air, shattering my world, I thought, forever.

I never saw my mother again.

In the meantime, I felt two hands pick me up and take me to a warm, quiet room. Through my tears and howls, I realized that they didn't feel as soft and warm as my mother's. Still, I was glad to be somewhere; secure and cared for. In that room that they called 'nursery', there were lots of babies like me. Each of them had been left in the cradle just the way I was. I didn't like it there. It was not home, though it was comfortable. The nurses fed me whenever I was hungry. I had never been fed as much at home.

I grew up fast and well. Every day, the doctors came to check me. They were satisfied with my growth. I ate, played for a while and slept most of the time. I had a cot, a pillow, a blanket, some sheets and a few donated clothes. On my cot hung a tag that said:

Date of arrival : 20.3.87
Asha
Female
Date of birth : 1.3.87

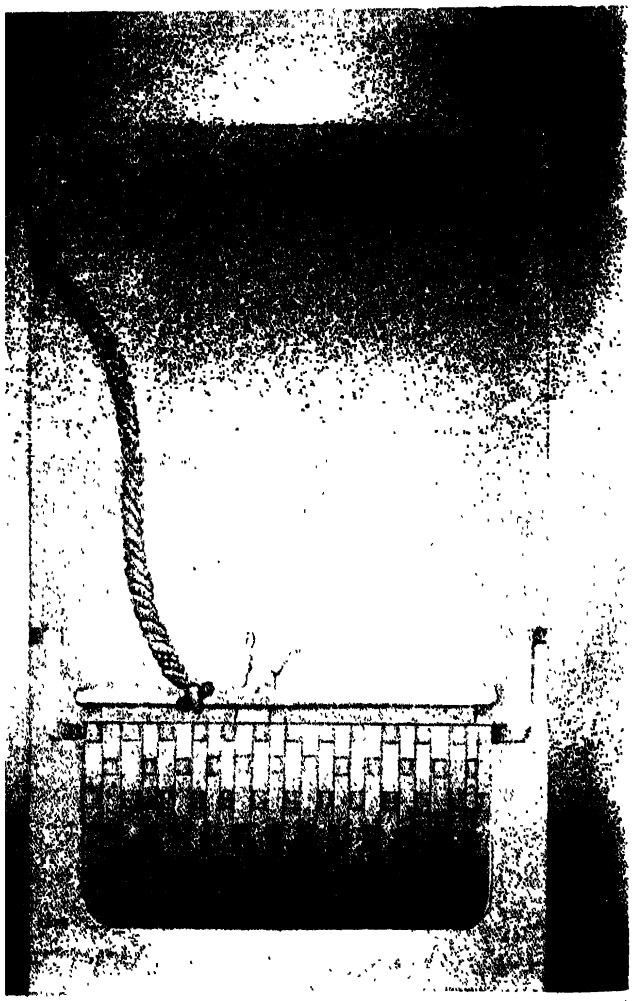
Before I knew it, I was six months old—that's a lot. I was a big baby now, so they took me to the 'toddlers' room'. A new room, a new environment and a new routine. I didn't like it there the first few days. But later when I started crawling, I could visit my friends in their cots. We played a lot and grew up together. Some of us got our first tooth at the same time and some others took their first steps together. We were bathed, cleaned and fed. But there were so many of us that no one had much time to talk to us.

Once, a group of people came and looked around. They spoke in adult language, for we never understood what they said. They went away and came again, and again, and looked at one child. And then, after a few weeks, they took him away. One crib was empty, but not for long. Another like me soon came to occupy it.

I wondered where the child was being taken to and why. He had been adopted by a couple who had no children. Would I ever be accepted by someone? And deep down, I wished that some kind and needy souls would search for me and take me with them... take me home.

Months later, a couple came to visit me. Once, twice. The third time, they spent the whole day with me. In the beginning I was shy because I wasn't used to so much love and affection. Gradually, I felt more comfortable. I liked being with them. But I wasn't sure how long this would last. Would they leave me somewhere one day—like my mother had? I hoped not.

a Bell...



No one asked me if I wanted to go. I didn't know where I was going. But I had to go. They took me to my new house. It was big and beautiful. I had never seen anything like that before. Everyone was so excited to see me. There were lots of toys and clothes and people. I felt wanted, important and cared for.

They taught me how to speak. The first word I said was 'Mama'. I learnt to say 'Papa' very soon. I remember seeing tears in my mother's eyes when she heard my babble; she showered me with hugs and kisses. They were my parents, for they had given me a new life. I was their hope and they were mine. I needed parents and they wanted a child. Together, we made a beautiful family.

I've grown to be a healthy, playful child. I don't look like either of my 'parents'. I know that I'm adopted. I have two sets of parents—I'm fortunate. My biological parents brought me into this world, but left me. My foster parents gave me a chance to live my life. I'm a 'normal' child; I have red blood in my veins, I was born from my mother's womb and I laugh and cry like any other child. Nowhere on my face is it written that I am adopted. I share this truth with all my friends and teachers, without shame or fear. Some of them thought I was lying. But later they believed me, and today, everyone respects me for what I am. That's what I want—acceptance and love, not pity.

I think I have the most wonderful parents in the world. They are kind and large-hearted. I'm sure it was difficult for them too, but they have always given themselves to me completely. I respect them and love them the way you love your parents. They love me and treasure me just like yours do.

I am adopted...I am normal...

I am a child.

and Love

LEGEND OF AN ADOPTED CHILD

Anonymous

Once there were two women
Who never knew each other,
One you do not remember
The other you call mother.

Two different lives shaped
To make yours one
One became your guiding star
The other became your sun.

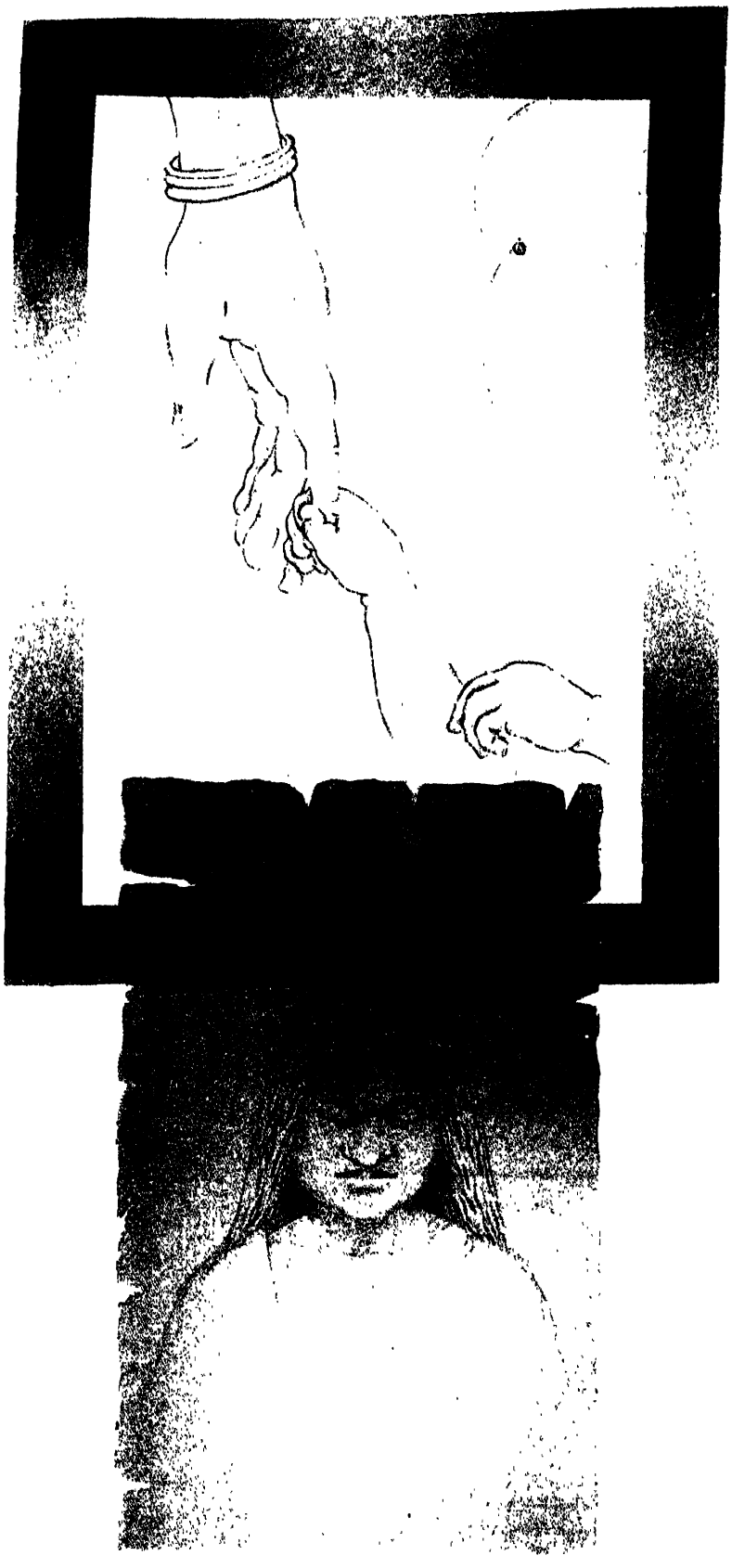
The first gave you life
The second taught you to live it
The first gave you need for love
The second was there to give it.

One gave you nationality
The other gave you a name
One gave you the seed of talent
The other gave you an aim.

One gave you emotion
The other calmed your fears.
One saw your first sweet smile
The other dried your tears.

One gave you up—
It was all she could do
The other prayed for a child
And God led her straight to you.

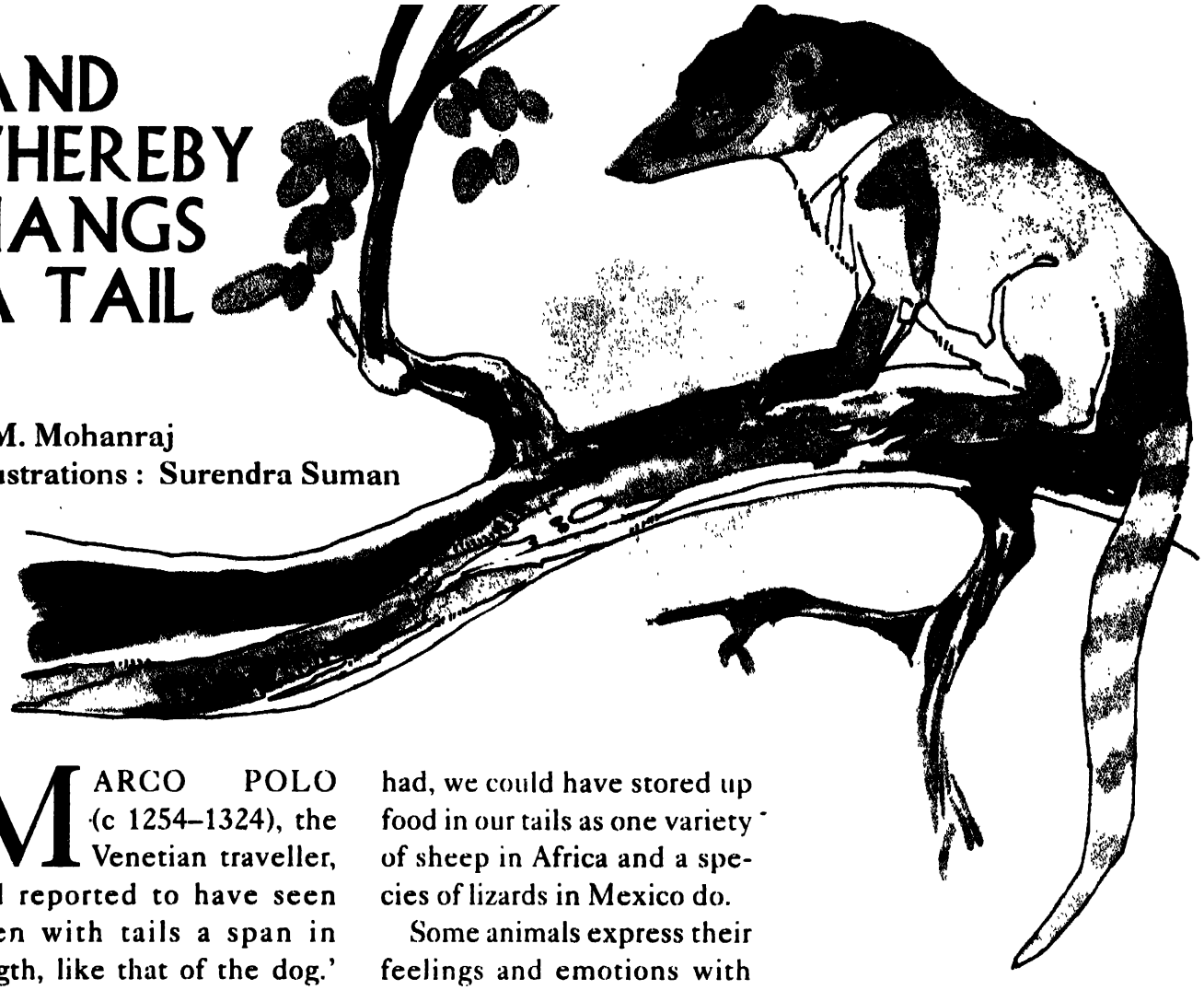
And now you ask me through your tears
The age old question through the years
Heredity or Environment
Which are you the product of?
Neither my darling—neither
Just two different kinds of love.



Courtesy : Co-ordinating Voluntary Adoption Resource Agency (CVARA)

AND THEREBY HANGS A TAIL

V.M. Mohanraj
Illustrations : Surendra Suman



MARCO POLO (c 1254–1324), the Venetian traveller, had reported to have seen 'men with tails a span in length, like that of the dog.' Stories of men with tails were common from very early times and well beyond the middle ages—why, even in this century V.D. Savarkar, had claimed in his memoirs written in the '20s, of having seen a tailed man in the Andamans! He would certainly not have seen such a man. Undoubtedly, he wrote that based on hearsay, for man (*Homo sapiens*) does not have a tail. All vertebrates, except man, have tails.

That tails are of immense use to the animals is not known to many. This, of course, is understandable because we do not have that organ. If only we had, we could have stored up food in our tails as one variety of sheep in Africa and a species of lizards in Mexico do.

Some animals express their feelings and emotions with their tails. When a dog wags his tail or tucks his tail between his hind legs, you know what he feels. Cats, too, show their anger, fear or panic with their tails. In fact, most animals, for example, the elephant, horse, cattle or even the squirrel, hold or move their tails in particular ways to express their emotions.

The tail has many other functions. The monkey holds with his tail the branch of the tree on which he sits. In fact, monkeys found in the New World, especially the spider monkey and his relatives, grasp things with their tails. The African chameleon, certain species of rats and opossum use their tails as support at the rear. So also some birds. The woodpecker spreads the tail like a fan and keeps it pressed against the vertical trunk of the tree lest, perhaps, she slips. The tails of cats have a keen sense of touch. When they climb down a tree, they feel their way with their tails. In the case of some animals the tails act as rudders. Fishes, otters, crocodiles and such other aquatic animals steer through water with their tails. Birds use their tails not only to turn when they fly but also as propellers. The tail helps ani-

mals like the leopards and kangaroos keep their balance when they run.

The tail is a defensive as well as an offensive weapon. When faced with a more powerful adversary, the jackal turns and shows his tail which being bushy does not get hurt if bitten. And if the enemy bites, the tuft of hair that comes off the tail and gets stuck in his mouth would incapacitate him for fight for a while, and the jackal can escape. The cow, horse and squirrel use their tails to chase away the flies and other insects that irritate them. You would have seen the dog curling itself to sleep, covering his face with the tail. This is to prevent insects from disturbing him. The wall lizard is said to sacrifice his tail to save himself from a predator. The tails of the ray fish, scorpion and crocodile, on the other hand,



are primarily offensive weapons. One hit with a crocodile's tail would paralyse, if not kill, any animal, however strong it might be.

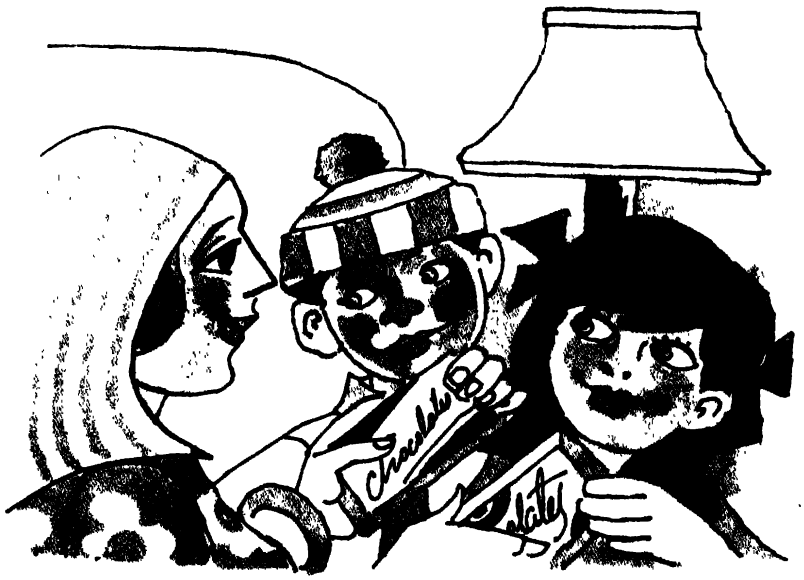
Interestingly, quite a few animals 'speak' with their tails. It is with the tail that the hare 'tells' his companion in danger, "I am with you; don't be scared." When confronting a dog, the cat holds his tail straight up to say, "I defy you."

The tale of the tail does not end here. You must have read about the fox that lost his tail and was made fun of by his friends because he looked ugly without his tail. The tail, no doubt, enhances the beauty of the animal. This is particularly true of birds. In the course of evolution has man lost something valuable?

Archana Lall, New Delhi
Illustration : Surendra Suman

Two children in our family
Myself and brother Jeet,
Mother bought two chocolates,
And we both had a treat!

If we were ten children,
Think what would have happened,
Fighting-fighting-fighting-fighting
And very little to eat.



Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

All those with a flair for writing and reporting, **join our select band of stringers!**
Send us reports/features of happenings/events in your town
which would interest children. Photographs are welcome.
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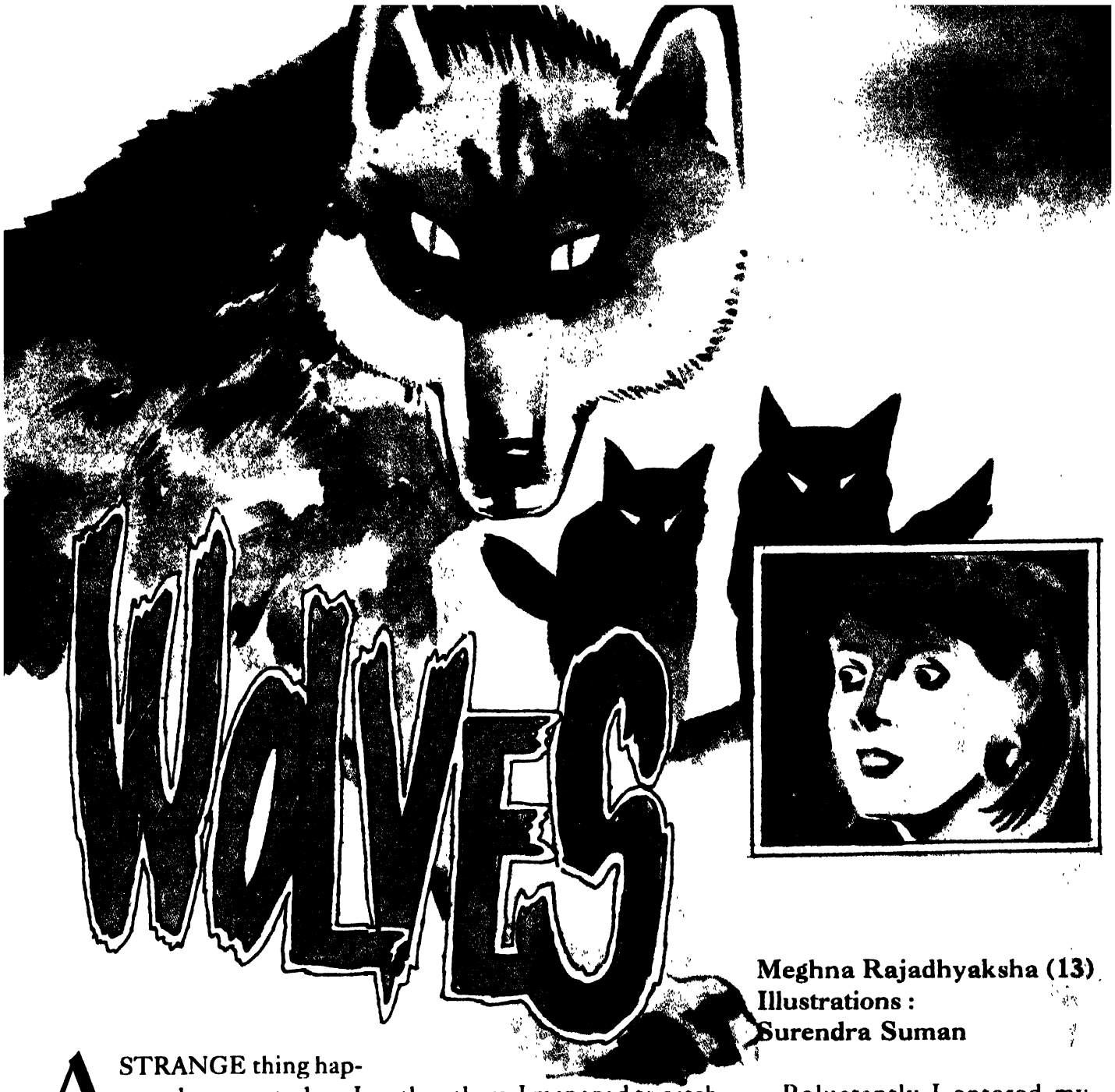
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Meghna Rajadhyaksha (13)
Illustrations :
Surendra Suman

A STRANGE thing happened to me today. I still have to let the incident sink into my mind properly. I still have to understand it completely. I can't tell anyone about it, either. When I myself find it so difficult to believe, why would anyone else believe it?

It all started when we arrived here yesterday. Unlike the others, I managed to catch forty winks during the journey. It was late when we reached. The night was in full bloom. But who had the energy to notice it? All my allusions to midnight walks were finely snubbed, and before retiring to bed, I was soundly warned against trying 'any silly escapades'.

Reluctantly I entered my tent. For almost two hours I listened to the dictates of my conscience. I turned a deaf ear to the call of the night. For almost two hours I ignored the ripples on the lake, the rustling of leaves, the cool touch of the wind, the grandeur of the mountains and the sparkling designs in the night sky. But I

could bear it no longer. The quietness of the night seemed to call out to me. All those around me lay in the blissful stillness of sleep. What harm would one midnight romp do? They wouldn't even know about it.

With such arguments to appease my conscience, I crawled out of my tent. I did not have to convince myself for long. As soon as I set my eyes on the world outside, the three main judges of my actions—my heart, mind and conscience—unanimously agreed to support my decision. My city-bred eyes had never seen such beauty before and they absolutely refused to look away to check the path I was traversing. Finally, my feet took charge of things. They took me the way they wanted to go, and I followed without knowing or caring.

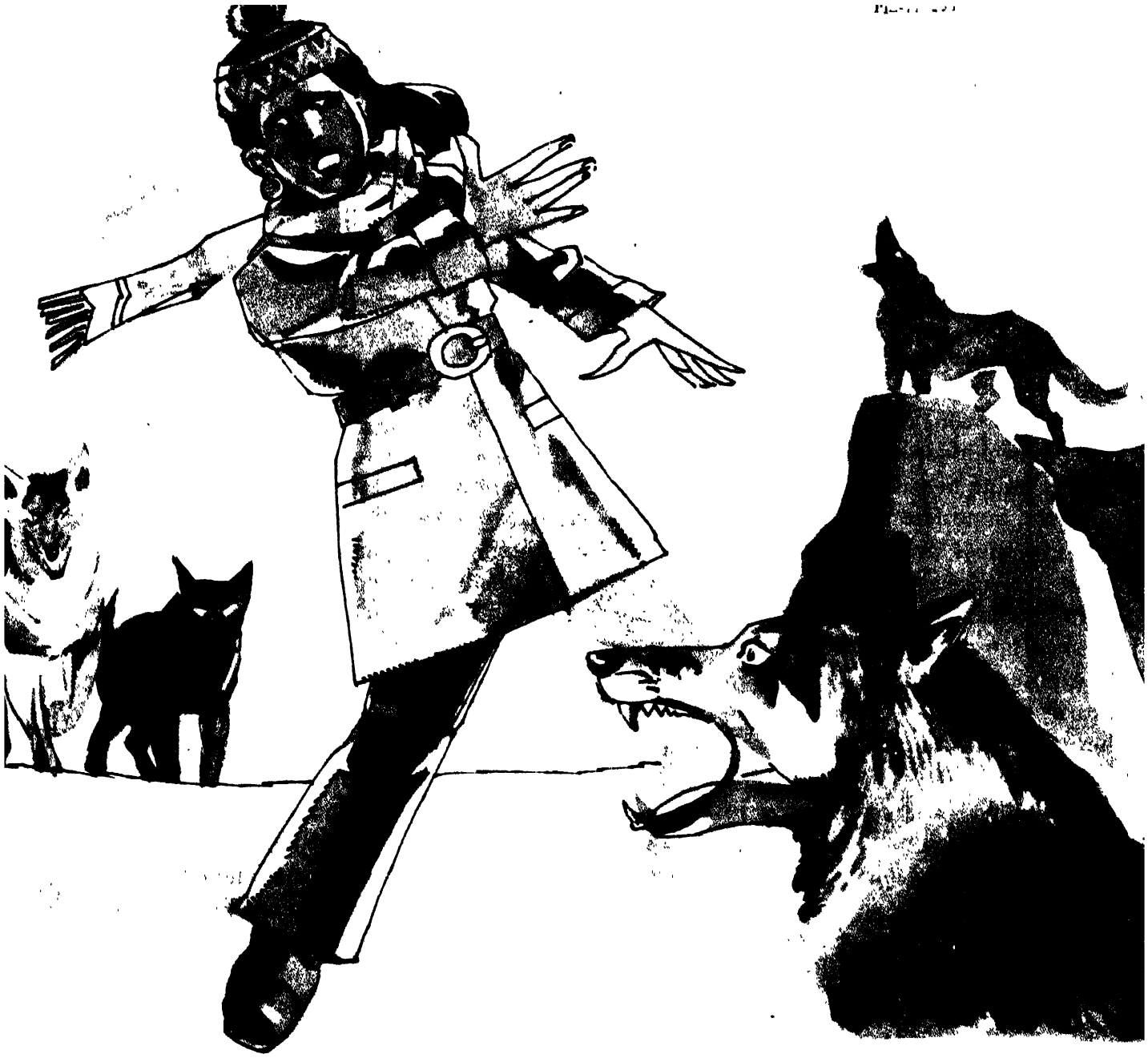
I must have wandered for an hour before I realized my mistake. Feet were not supposed to be given the sole responsibility of governing direction. They specialized in walking—not thinking! Anyway, the damage was done. I had come too far away from the tents to remember the direction I had moved in. In simple words, I was lost! The three judges, who for so long had been on my side, now turned traitors. For some time I just stood in one place and looked around. My mind was in a whirl. It was a totally new feeling—getting lost. The coldness that struck my heart, the dryness in my mouth, the immobility of my feet—it was all new to me. But so was the loneliness. The silence that had seemed so friendly, now weighed heavily upon me. Stories, terrible stories of these treacherous cliffs started coming back to me. Steep precipices, landslides, wild animals, tigers, bears, wolves... "Nonsense!" I said to myself. "That's all meant to scare you. They must be old wives' tales. Wild animals don't live out in the open like this. They usually live in National Parks!!"

But what was that? Something was in the bushes, something moving. Something was behind as well. What was it? There was one there, as well. Oh, no! They were all around me. They had surrounded me. What were they? That's when I saw those yellow eyes glinting eerily. My heart went cold. So it wasn't an old wives' tale. They did come here. They—the wolves, they all seemed poised to attack. I was scared. But there was little I could do. I screamed. The only answer was its echo reverberating in the darkness of the night. I screamed again—my voice devoid of hope. There was no sound except the low growling of the animals. I gave up, resigned to fate.



But wait! What was that? A figure, a person. Someone was coming. Someone at last. Someone heard me. I almost cried with joy. Then something strange happened. The wolves who, till then, had been making low, hungry growls, started howling. It wasn't a conquering howl. It was a scared one, as if all of them were trying to pull together to show some stronger enemy their might, and they weren't exactly confident of it. Suddenly they turned tail and ran. 'Fled' is a more appropriate word. They dashed away as if they were being chased. It was really unsettling to see such fear, that too in an animal you were scared of.

I was just collecting my



senses when a girl appeared through the bushes. For a moment, I didn't know how to react. It dawned on me that she was an unlikely figure to seen on the mountains. But somehow, I hadn't expected someone like this. She seemed so small, so dainty, so fragile—hardly a person to go wandering about the mountains at night like this. Her delicate features showed a mixture of surprise and concern. Those dark, expressive eyes looked questioningly at me. In a rush of words I tried to explain my predicament to her. I don't know how much she understood, but I saw with some relief that her countenance softened and a smile lit up her face. "Follow me," she said and held out her hand to me. I took it and we started walking.

Her name was Kirti Rao. She was about the best companion I could have wished for. Though it did take some time for her to open up, there was no stopping her when she did. She went on and on about a variety of subjects. The mountains, the trees there, the village, the people, the animals and every other thing you

could think of. The wolves seemed to be her favourite subject. She knew their habits, their hide-out and their hunting grounds. "They usually hunt around here at night. They took away a girl of about your age five years ago. The villagers haven't forgotten that incident yet. They still feel scared to venture out on these cliffs after sunset."



Her words sent a sort of cold shiver down my spine. I could well imagine myself meeting with the same fate as that of the girl those animals took away five years ago.

In a bid to change the topic, I asked her where she lived. She pointed to the top of a nearby mountain. Could I visit her there if I wanted to? She seemed to hesitate a bit before she nodded. "Yes, do go," she said, "they too should know."

We reached the camp before long. After bidding my new friend farewell, I returned to my tent. I sat up for a while pondering about the night's happenings—the trip, my walk, the wolves, their strange behaviour and above all, Kirti. She was somehow so strange. Her presence on the mountain at that unearthly hour, her face, those hauntingly beautiful eyes of hers, her voice, her stories and those words—"they too should know" which somehow seemed so significant, but I could not see why.

It was late when I woke up the next day. I found a note by my pillow saying that after many unsuccessful attempts to rouse me, the others had left for the day. They would be back late and I was expected to complete my chores and some of theirs by then. The rest of the day was mine and I could spend it as I liked. Overjoyed, I gobbled down my breakfast and got together my climbing gear to climb the way up to Kirti's house.

It was a long, hard climb and the sun was high in the sky by the time I reached the top. There was one solitary structure there. It seemed to be an old, dilapidated kind of hut.

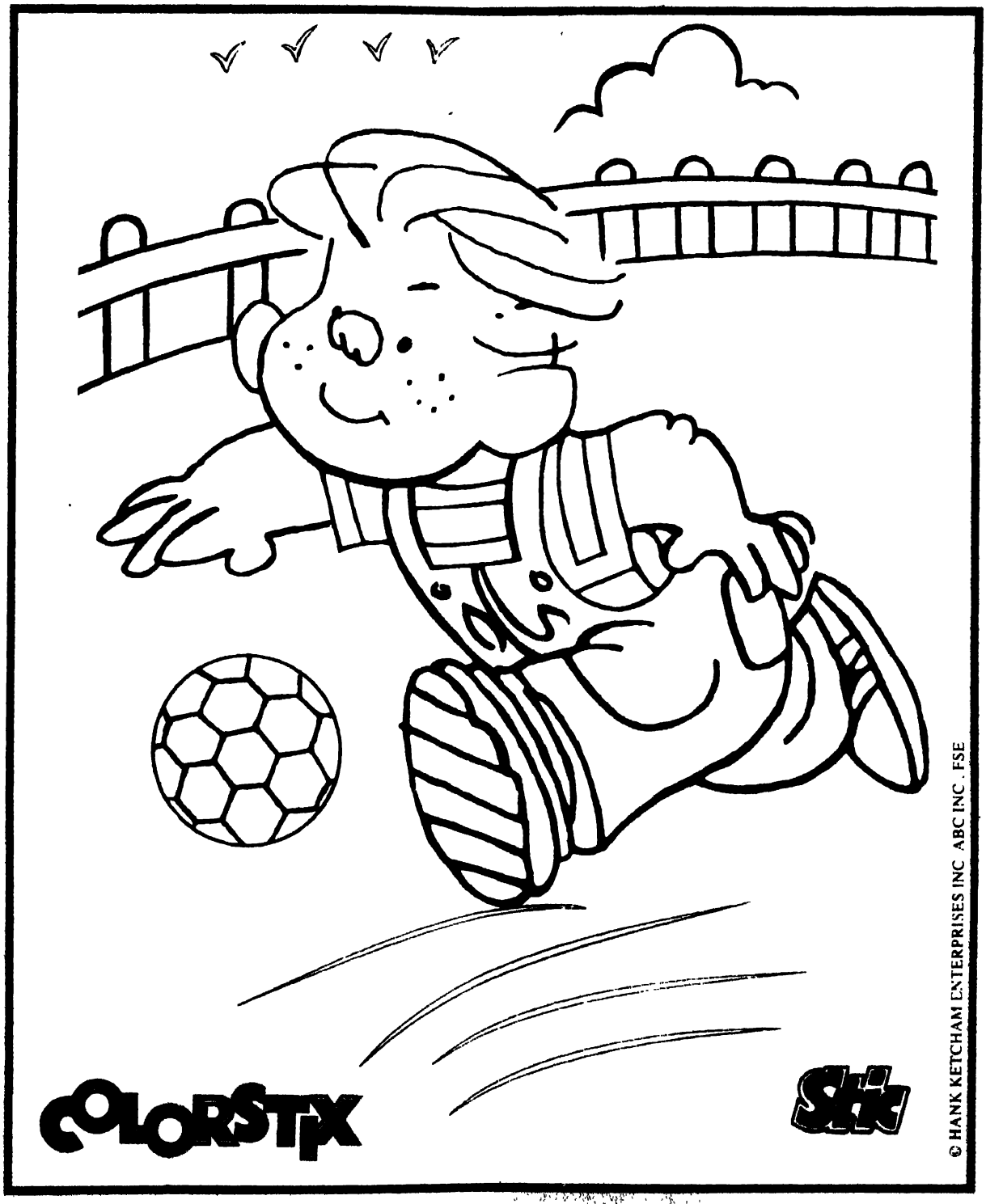
I walked up to it, and knocked. The door was opened by an elderly woman. I asked her if I could meet Kirti. She just stared at me. Assuming she was slightly deaf, I raised my voice slightly and asked again, "Is Kirti at home?"

The woman stared harder. Then she opened her mouth as if to say something and shut it again. She opened it once more and in a soft, faltering voice, she said, "W...who... which Kirti do you want?"

Now it was my turn to stare at her. It took a minute before the question sank into my mind. I launched into a description of the girl I had met the night before. "I want to see Kirti Rao," I said. "I met her on the mountain late last night. She said she lived somewhere here. She's a very pretty girl—about my height, fair, with dark eyes and waist-length hair. Doesn't she live here? Don't you know her?"

The woman was staring at me again. Once more her mouth opened and shut and opened again. She spoke in that same soft, faltering voice, "Yes, I did know that Kirti. She was my daughter. But five years ago, my Kirti, the light of my life, was taken away by the wolves at the foot of this mountain!"

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PANDA CLUB OF INDIA

Newsletter Vol. 2 No. 1

Hi friends,

I hope all is well with you. The long winter in the north will soon give way to spring, and flowers will be in bloom. The cold and biting wind made me nostalgic about my home but I'm not complaining—because your love and affection has given me so much joy. Yes, I love India and it's especially great to be here when the nation is celebrating 50 years of independence.

I happened to read about Indepex '97, the International Philatelic meet and exhibition, and later I visited the pavilion at the India International Trade Fair. It was a revelation—there is so much knowledge in stamp collecting and so much to learn about the culture and people of other lands. I saw rare stamps and first day covers that were really a collector's pride. A special stamp was released on Mother Teresa—the angel of peace. Friends, it would be a great idea to begin collecting stamps and call yourself a young philatelist! Look up the dictionary to get the exact meaning of the word. It's a great habit to consult the dictionary when in doubt. And do write in about some rare hobbies which you have developed. We could share and exchange ideas and then life will not be so boring. Anyway, exams will soon be round the corner. I hope you have set your priorities right and planned your study schedule. Competition is close and you should be confident in your approach. Here's wishing you all the best for your studies and exams. Chin up!



Young Gaurav Sharma of Delhi visualises Panda this way.

Lots of love always,

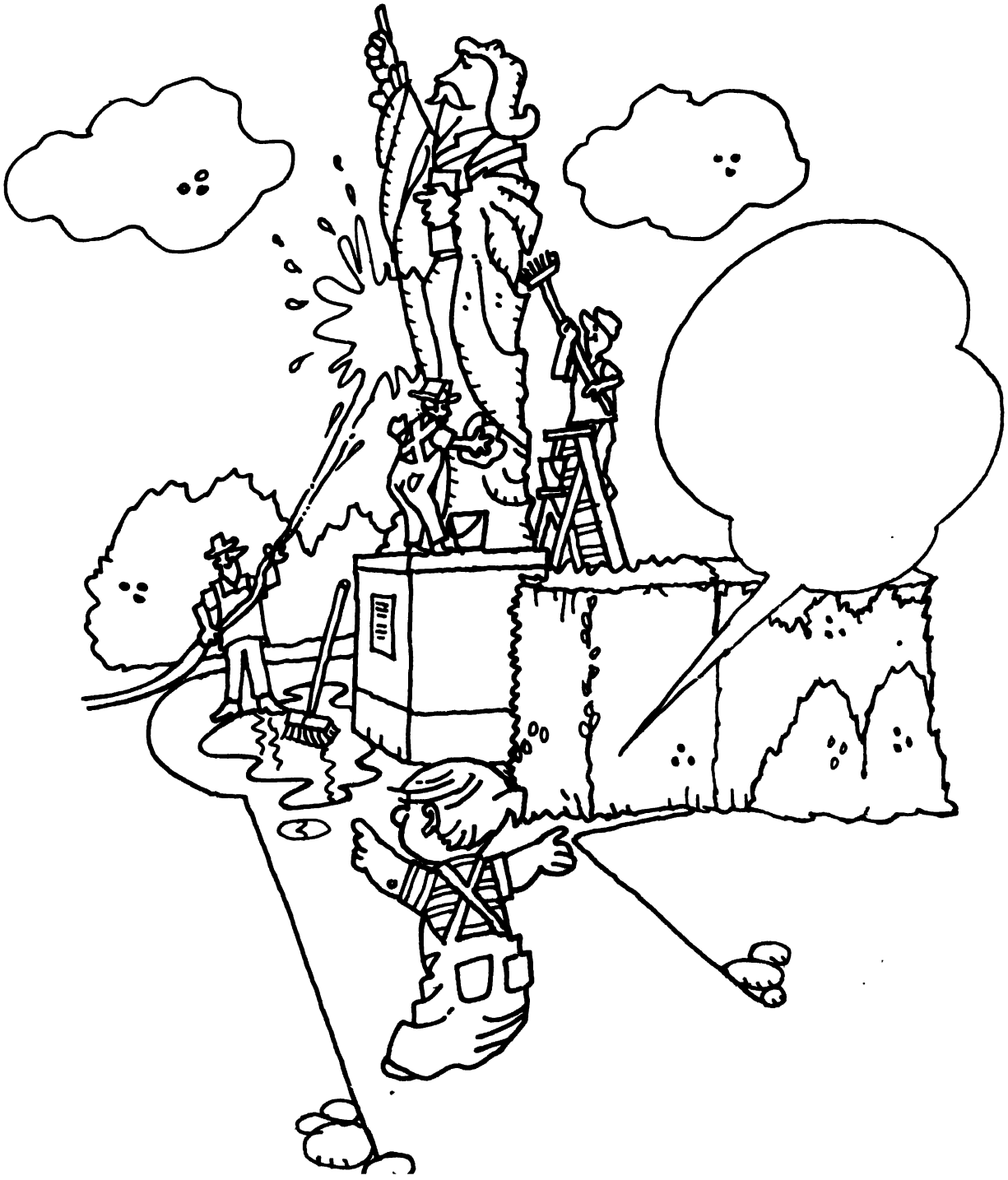
Panda

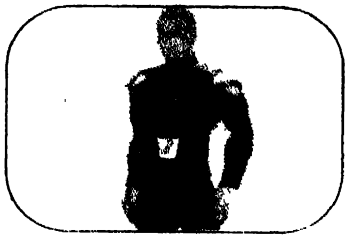
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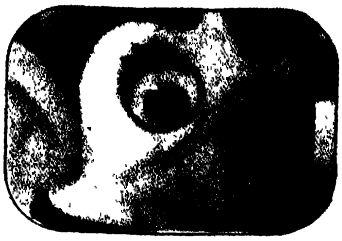
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Colour the picture and fill in the blurb with what you think Dennis is saying.





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Tuesday 5.30 P.M. on DD II—RIMBA'S ISLAND : Six lively, lovable, colourful costumed animal characters who dwell deep in the idyllic rain forest, share their joys and learn from one another catchy songs and simple stories—(dubbed in Hindi)



Thursday 5.00 P.M. on DD II—SUPERHUMAN SAMURAI SYBER SQUAD : Sam Collins, a video game champion and leader of a teenage garage band, fights an alien warlord 'Kilokahn' who has infected the digital world with monster "megaviruses."

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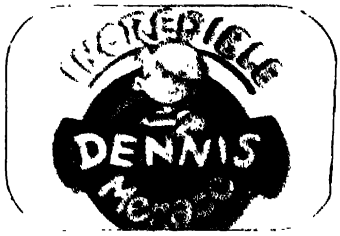
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YOUR CALENDAR OF PANDA CLUB SHOWS

CHANNEL	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
DOORDARSHAN METRO		FLASH GORDON 6:30 PM	RIMBA'S ISLAND 5:30 PM		SUPERHUMAN SAMURAI SYBER SQUAD 5:00 PM PHANTOM 5:00 PM		DEFENDERS OF THE EARTH 5:30 PM DENNIS THE MENACE 6:00 PM

RETOLD BY SAVITRI
ILLUSTRATIONS
AJANTA GUHATHAKURTA

Kubera was the Lord of Wealth, and very proud.

Festivals, feasts, charity, loans...despite all the spending I do, my wealth only seems to increase. I must find a new way to spend money...Hmm...mm. Why not invite the gods to a feast? I shall begin with Lord Shiva, my favourite.

Ganapathi was Lord Shiva's son. Fun loving, he troubled people if they took no notice of him. He liked good food and plenty of it.

...ord, I am the richest in ...e world. I have helped everyone in need... everybody praises me...

...desire to ...our family ... to a feast. I ... shall call all the important people of the world who may pay their respects to you.

...this now.

If you can't come, may I invite Devi Parvati and the children?

Parvati will not go anywhere without me, nor will the children without their mother.

I told them ... refuse my ...


On the day of the feast
I am hungry and I want to eat first.
Lord Ganapathi has eaten all the food we cooked And he's still hungry. It will take time to cook more food .
Shouting from the dining hall...
Make more food Quick! We can't displease him
What's this? Nothing ready yet? This is an insult. I will eat these fruits and vegetables...plates and vessels...and you too, Kubera.
No way, I am hungry. Give me food NOW...
Lord, please give me a little time to make more food.
Go and ask your mother to give you something.
Forgive me, Lord, for being so proud of my wealth and ability. I have learnt a lesson. Without your grace I would be lo
THE E

The King of Fools



Neha Tuteja **Illustrations: Be**

There was once a brainless, silly man
Who drove a can,
and filled a van
Who swam a mile
and ran the sea
Who ran on seeing his file
and closed the bee
A total disaster was he!

His shallowness was so intense
That he jumped over his kite
and flew the fence
He [illegible] go to the sun to prove his might
He was so silly.
You would laugh to see his plight
He was [illegible] night.

He was the king of all [illegible]miles, he read the miles
and measured his books
On seeing the kids laugh, he would give them
Icy killer looks!

He was forever in his second childhood
For he ate the wood
and carved his egg
He walked in the streets to brood
and came back home to beg for food.

He was always playing the fool
For he rode his wool
and knitted the mule.

He was so infantile yet
That the people crowned
Emperor of addleheads
For he threw a flower
and presented a rock
Before Christmas, he sang
and stood under the rain
By banging his head, he tried to break the rock
That was the first time he used his head
But the poor fellow landed up dead.

ROHAN IS ANGRY

Maya Achar
Illustrations : Beejee

"STOP IT, you two! Stop it, Rohan!" The watchman caught the two boys by the scruff of their necks and separated them. "Come on, both of you, off to the Principal."

He dragged both the squirming boys and pushed them into the Principal's office, just as the bell for the assembly rang.

"In a fight again, Rohan, I see," said the Principal, Mr. Rao, grimly. "This is the third time this month, isn't it? And who's this boy—oh, it's Manish! Manish, my boy, come here. Did Rohan beat you?"

"Yes," said Manish, tears coming to his eyes. "And he twisted my right arm, and it's paining! And he said he would put a rope round my neck, and drag me about!"

"I see," said Mr. Rao, looking at Rohan even more grimly. "You may go, Manish."

"And you, Rohan, what do you have to say for yourself?" asked Mr. Rao, after the door closed behind Manish. "Last time I had warned you that you would have to call your father if there is another complaint against you."

"But, sir, Manish..." began Rohan eagerly.

"Did you beat Manish?" asked Mr. Rao.

"Yes, sir. But..."

"Did you twist his arm?"

"But...but..."

"Did you?"

"Yes, sir."

"And did you say that you'll drag him with a rope round his neck?"

"But that was because..."

"Yes or no?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did Manish start the fight?"

"No, sir. But..."

"Then call your father or mother to school tomorrow. Till then, you will stand outside the class the whole day, without eating during break."

"Sir, please let me explain..."

"If you argue with me, I will cane you," said Mr. Rao, unpleasantly. "I've had enough trouble with you this term."

Rohan glared at him for a moment, and then turned and walked out without saying another word. He stood outside his classroom, looking down at his feet angrily.

He was still standing there when the bell for recess rang.

"Hey, Rohan, what happened? Why didn't you come to class?" asked Pranav, his friend, coming towards him.

Rohan looked at Pranav. "You know that stupid coward Manish! He was teasing that small kitten which has been sitting near the fence for the past few days. He had put a string round its neck, and was dragging it roughly along. The string was cutting into the poor thing's neck. I told him to let it go, but he refused, and began to pull its tail too..."

"So you lost your head, beat

him up, and were taken to the Principal," said Pranav. "Rohan, you must learn to control your temper! You know how often this month..."

"Would you have been able to control yourself if you had seen the condition of that poor kitten? It was so tiny, Pranav, and Manish was laughing at it," said Rohan fiercely. "Would you? Would you?"

Pranav sighed. "Didn't you explain it to Mr. Rao?"

"He wouldn't allow me to even open my mouth," said Rohan sadly. "Now I can enter class only after I bring Mummy to school."

"Shall I get your tiffin for you?" asked Pranav.

"No. He said no eating," said Rohan, turning his face away. His legs were paining, and his stomach was growling with hunger. Tears rose to his eyes, but he blinked them back.

"...and so, you'll have to come and meet Mr. Rao tomorrow," said Rohan to his mother that evening, after explaining everything.

She sighed. "Oh, Rohan, you are a good boy at heart. Why must you get into these brawls and fights?"

"But was I wrong, Mum? Was I wrong? You too love animals. Wouldn't you have done the same thing?" demanded Rohan. "Tell me, tell me!"

His mother sighed again. "Yes, I know that Manish was



cruel. But we cannot take the law in our own hands, Rohan. You should have gone and told the Principal."

"And do you think he would have believed me?" asked Rohan.

His mother did not reply. She knew that Rohan had been punished often enough for being naughty; now, like in the 'Wolf, Wolf' story, even if he was actually fighting for a good cause, the Principal was not likely to believe him.

"I'll try and explain things to Mr. Rao," said his mother gently, putting an arm around him. "But, Rohan, it would have been so much easier to do that if you were a well-behaved boy!"

The next day, Rohan's mother told Mr. Rao the whole incident.

Mr. Rao sighed. "Yes, now I can see that Rohan was merely protecting the kitten. I will speak to Manish about it. He cannot go scot-free. I will not tolerate cruelty to animals in my school."

He tapped on the table thoughtfully with his pen. "Rohan is good at heart, but he tends to get into fights," he said finally. "He has plenty of energy, which must be di-

rected properly. I think I will do something to see that his humanitarian qualities are put to good use."

After Rohan's mother had gone, he sat quietly for a long time. He knew he had been unfair to Rohan; he had to make up for it, or Rohan would always feel bitter about him.

The next day, when Rohan was called out of class by the Principal, all his classmates stared at him sympathetically. Rohan went pale. Now what had he done, and what punishment was he going to get?

Fearfully, he entered the Principal's office.

Twenty minutes later, Rohan was out of the office again.

But what a different Rohan this was from the one who had entered! This Rohan was smiling and looking very happy indeed!

Just as he entered his class, the recess bell rang. Within minutes, there was a small crowd round him.

"Rohan! Did you get caned?" asked one boy.

"Rohan! Was sir very angry? What did he say?" asked Pranav quietly.

"Did he say you'll be thrown out of school?" asked another boy. Even though Rohan was naughty, they all liked him, because he was an honest and fair boy, and kind to those in trouble.

"No!" said Rohan, beaming. "The Principal was very kind to me. And do you know what he suggested?"

"What?"

"He suggested that I form a group, my own team of about six to eight boys, and we keep an eye over things like the environment, the garden, cleanliness, and prevention of cruelty to animals. We should have a representative in each class, and we should have debates, quizzes, etc. He will tell a couple of teachers to help us out."

"Wow!" said the boys. Immediately, there was some excited discussion.

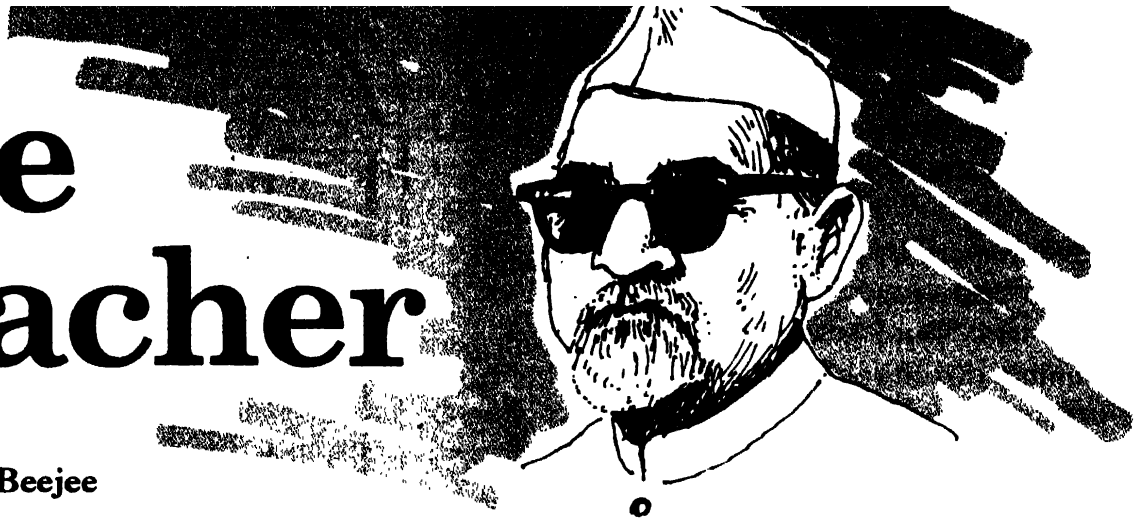
When Mr. Rao looked out of his office window a few minutes later, he felt happy. He knew that he had done the right thing. If Rohan was given responsibility, it would not only keep him out of trouble, but it would also help the other boys change their way of thinking.

Outside, Rohan was laughing happily. "I love this type of thing," he told Pranav when they were alone. "You will help me, won't you, Pranav? Mr. Rao told me to start with the cleanliness of the school building as our first project." He laughed again.

Rohan was no longer angry.



The Teacher



Thangamani
Illustrations : Beejee

Dr. Zakir Husain, the third President of Independent India, was a great educationist who devoted all his life to the cause of education. He advocated Mahatma Gandhi's concept of Basic Education which combined academics with vocational training. He believed that every Indian should be educated so that he or she may prove to be worthy citizens.

A great nationalist and freedom fighter, Dr. Zakir Husain was one of the founder members of the Jamia Milia Islamia University. He held the post of the Vice-Chancellor of the University from 1926 to 1948, during which period, he served the institution most selflessly, to give it international stature.

Dr. Zakir Husain was a gentle and humble person whose involvement with children was remarkable. He wrote stories for children in Urdu.

He later came into public life, being first nominated as a Member of the Rajya Sabha and later as Governor of Bihar. He served as the Vice President of India before being elected as the President of India in 1967. He died in 1969, at the age of 72, after only two years in office.

Dr. Zakir Husain's birth anniversary falls on February 24.

THE YOUNG student of class eight was delivering an impassioned speech on the qualities of an ideal student and the entire audience listened spellbound. For the speaker, Zakir Husain, it was not just a speech that he was delivering but something he believed in. His teachers, particularly, the Headmaster, Syed Altaf Husain, nodded in approval. Zakir was a favourite student of the entire teaching staff, due to his intelligence, humility and helpful nature.

Zakir glanced at his Headmaster. He thought the world of him. It was from him that he had imbibed his views on the duties of a student. Syed Altaf Husain not only exhorted his students to give up a life of comfort and live for the sake of duty, but himself lived a life that put duty before everything else. His influence on young Zakir was considerable.

Some years later, when Zakir completed his matriculation, his Headmaster invited him to a farewell dinner.

"Zakir, come and sit by my side," he called.

The dinner was lavish. The food being served included such delicious dishes that it made everyone ravenously hungry. However, Zakir hardly paid any attention to it preferring to listen to his revered teacher speak of duty and austerity. Then the sweet dish was served. Still talking, and looking at Zakir's face the Headmaster poured a glass of cold water on Zakir's plate.

Zakir was eating mechanically, his eyes and ears intent on his Headmaster and his words. He ate the sweet, water and all without changing expression

He had not noticed that there was anything wrong with the dish. At the end of the meal, his Headmaster patted Zakir on his shoulder.

"I am impressed by your concentration and sense of purpose," he said. "But I want you to remember this all your life—one cannot enjoy life and still excel in the performance of duty."

These words stayed with Zakir all his life. It was in tribute to his ideal teacher that he chose teaching as a career, though he was at one time keen on becoming a doctor. And when he could not, due to some serious illness, he studied law. But finally he chose to become a teacher.



As a student at the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh (the present Aligarh Muslim University), Zakir was involved with the nationalist movement, having come under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi. Responding to his call to the youth of the country, Zakir Husain, along with some other lecturers and students, left the institution on the grounds that it was funded by the British Government.

This group then founded another institution—the Jamia Milia Islamia University—in 1920. It was started as a nationalist institution, with a view to unify the Hindus and Muslims even as quality education was imparted to the students. Most importantly, it was not funded by the British Government. Zakir Husain was a Member of the Governing Committee of the institution. Its greatest patron was Mahatma Gandhi.

Zakir Husain later went to the Berlin University in Germany to work on his Ph.D. in Economics. While there, he got the news that the University he had helped found was on the verge of closure for want of funds. Distressed, Zakir Husain mustered the support of his friends who felt just as deeply about the institution. Together they decided to dedicate their entire lives to the University, drawing the minimum of salary.

True to their word, Zakir and his friends, Mujeeb and Abid Husain, joined the staff on their return. They began working for

Rs. 300 a month, which they reduced, first to Rs. 200 and next to Rs. 150. When he left Jamia in 1948, Zakir Husain was taking home just Rs. 95. He was always short of money, but never spoke of his difficulties to anyone.

During his tenure as Vice-Chancellor, Jamia boasted of many dedicated professionals on its staff including the likes of Devdas Gandhi, and enjoyed international stature.

He was convinced that the most impressionable years to impart education are the childhood years. Therefore he gave a lot of attention to the primary section of the educational institution of Jamia. When it came to teaching, Dr. Zakir Husain never stood on seniority or considered it below his dignity to do work which required lesser skills.

Once, when a secondary school teacher refused to teach a primary class, Dr. Zakir Husain began teaching the first standard students of his school. The tiny tots loved him and he revelled in telling them stories, even as he taught them their alphabet.

Though he was very gentle, Dr. Zakir Husain was also a strict disciplinarian. But his methods of enforcing them were unique. Even though he drew a pittance as salary and never wore expensive clothes, he always dressed in neatly washed and ironed clothes; even the coarse hand-spun and hand-woven khadi gave him an aristocratic look.

One day, Dr. Zakir Husain was walking to his class when he saw a high school boy wearing a dirty cap. "Come here, son," he invited the boy. "I'm taking you to my house," he said to the bewildered boy.

In his house, he removed the boy's cap.

"Sir, why are you removing the cap?" asked the boy.

"To wash it, son. It is dirty," he told the shamefaced boy.

He then washed it himself and ironed it dry before placing it back on the student's head. "There! Now off you go to the class!"

All the time, Dr. Zakir Husain never once scolded him.

Another day, as Dr. Zakir Husain entered the school premises, he saw some bits of paper lying about. He bent and picked them up, putting them in his pocket,. He kept doing it all the way to the class.

Inside the class, he pulled out the bits of paper and placed them on the table. "These things, I have collected on my way from home. This place is a temple of learning and should be kept clean," he told his young class.

He was extremely conscious about cleanliness. He regularly inspected the hostel kitchen and joined the students for meals in the dining-room of the hostel.

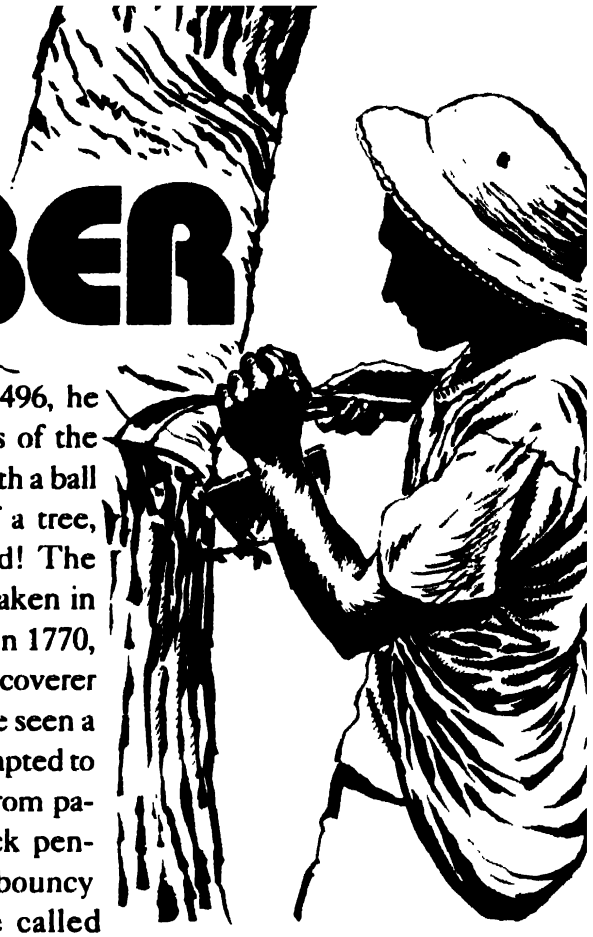
A man of great intellect, integrity and compassion, Dr. Zakir Husain was later elected the President of India.

The boy who had delivered an impassioned speech about the duties of a student, continued discharging his duties of every office in the most distinguished fashion, all through his life. He was one student who completely lived up to his teacher's faith in him.



The Story of RUBBER

Venita Jay
Illustrations :
Prithvishwar Gayen



IT IS PART of your bicycle and your toys. It makes colourful balloons. It is what you use to rub out pencil marks! It is just everywhere and in one way or another, part of almost every device! Today, it is just impossible to imagine a world without rubber.

The story of rubber begins in the wilderness of the Amazon jungle. The Indians of South and Central America used it to make balls, shoes, and bags. Even syringes were made from rubber, which is where *seringa*, the Portuguese word for rubber, comes from. The people of the Amazon jungle discovered how to extract the sap or *latex* by cutting the back of the rubber tree, *Hevea brasiliensis*, and fixing little gourd cups to each one. They thickened the sap by passing it through smoke and moulded it into different shapes. An early favourite Mayan Indian game, *tlachtli*, involved throwing the rubber ball into a stone ring set in a high wall, using only the shoulders and hips, but no hands. These famous ball courts can be found in the Mayan ruins to this day!

When Christopher Columbus returned from his second voyage to the New World in 1496, he noticed that the natives of the island of Haiti played with a ball made from the gum of a tree, which actually bounced! The Europeans were quite taken in by this new substance. In 1770, Joseph Priestley, the discoverer of oxygen, wrote, "I have seen a substance excellently adapted to the purpose of wiping from paper the marks of a black pencil..." Thus, the new bouncy substance came to be called rubber. Since everyone thought Columbus had brought it from India, it became known as *India rubber*.

Making objects with this strange raw material that arrived in Europe in the 18th century was quite a challenge. Shipments generally arrived in a coagulated state. The new substance appeared to be moody, changing its appearance with changes in temperature and weather. Goods manufactured in April became a sticky mass of useless rubbish by July. But by 1770, rubber tubing had been made in Europe, and clothes and shoes were being waterproofed with rubber. In 1823, a Scottish chemist, Charles Macintosh, discovered a new way of making waterproof material using rubber dissolved in naphtha. These "Macintosh" coats were not very popular due to their rubbery smell. Also, they became stiff and brittle in the cold, and soft and sticky in summer.

"If you meet a man who has on an India rubber cap, stock, coat, vest and shoes, with an India rubber money purse, without a cent of money, it is he..." That is how Charles Goodyear, the man who revolutionized the rubber industry, described himself. His discovery of vulcanization in 1839 cured the rubber industry of its sticky problems. Goodyear owned a hardware business in Philadelphia. In 1832, he became quite fascinated with rubber, as he believed he could turn it into many

useful things like raincoats and boots. This obsession with rubber cost him his business and he was in debt. People could not understand his passion for something which turned into a syrup come summer and hard as cement come winter. But Goodyear persisted with his experiments, boiling rubber with turpentine, magnesia in quicklime, sulphur and water.

It is said that he had to keep these experiments a secret even from his wife! The story goes that one day in February 1839, while his wife was away, Goodyear mixed sulphur with raw rubber. Suddenly, hearing her footsteps, he tossed the mixture into the stove. Later he went back to retrieve the rubber from the charred mixture. Something amazing had happened! This bit of rubber was now firm and resilient. Goodyear immediately realized the monumental significance of this process by which rubber when heated in the presence of sulphur increases in elasticity and thermostability. It became known as vulcanization.

Goodyear's discovery meant good news for the rubber industry. Not long after, in the 1840s, the first solid rubber tyres were used for horse-drawn carriages. The transport revolution began. The first tyres were made of solid rubber and gave quite a bumpy ride! In 1881, John Boyd Dunlop, an Irish vet, successfully used the "pneumatic" tyre to help his ten-year-old son win a tricycle race. Once the pneumatic tyre came into existence, the motor industry took off.

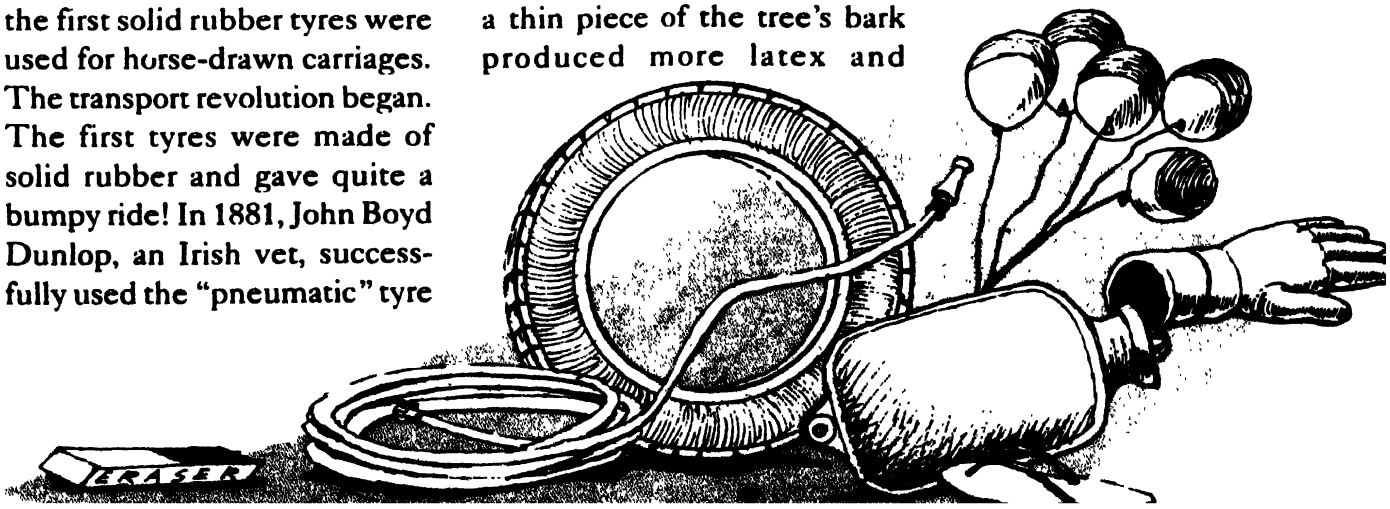
Now there was a "rubber boom". Thousands flocked to the Amazon to see if they could make a fortune as rubber tappers, only to work for the Patráo (boss) who demanded many kilos of rubber in return for the instruments, clothes, and food he gave them when they started. These poor rubber-tappers never got out of debt and were treated like slaves.

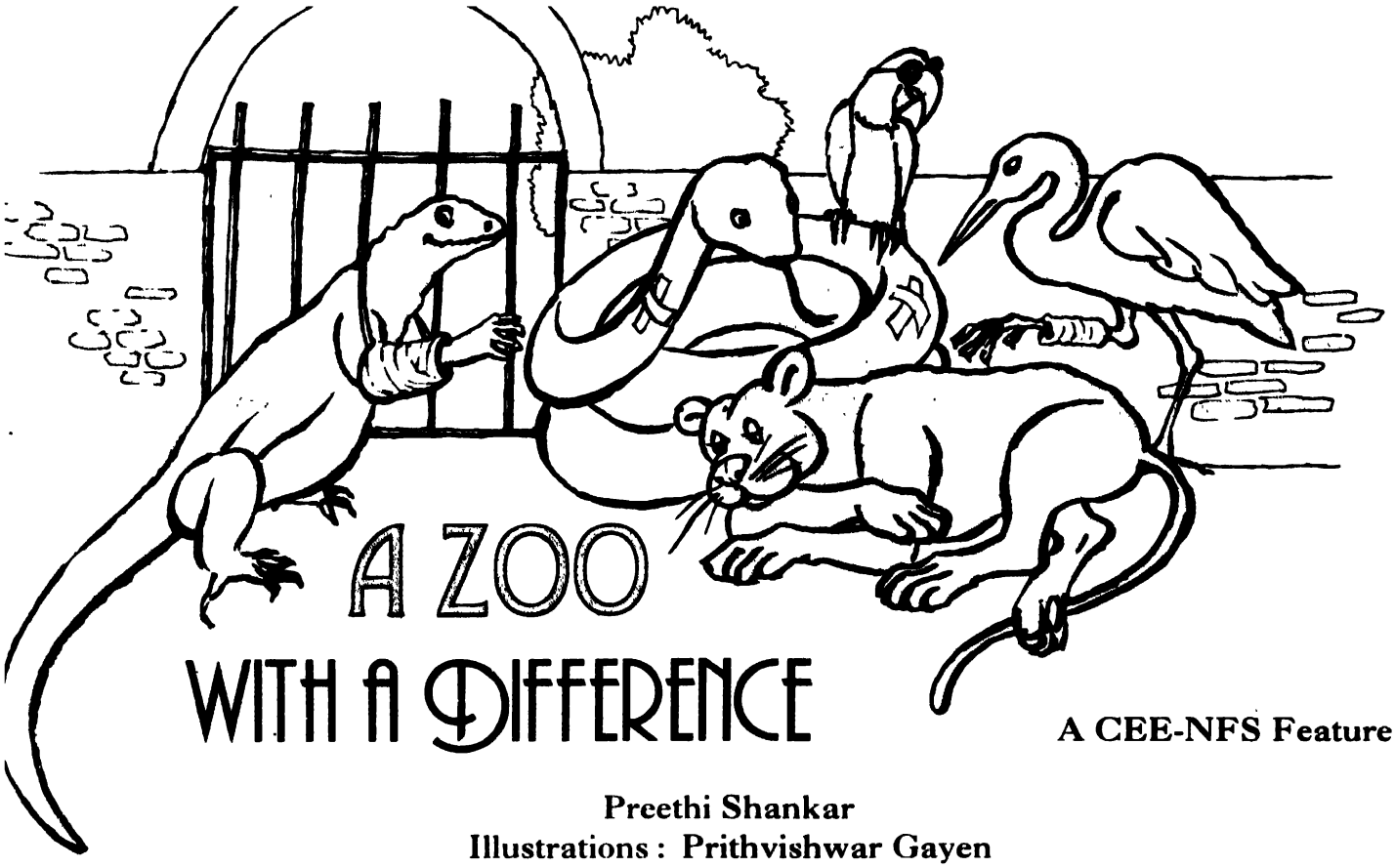
The rubber tree, *Hevea brasiliensis*, is native to the Amazon rain forest. In the latter half of the 19th century, British botanists brought specimens of rubber trees to study at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew in London. In 1876, Sir Henry Wickham brought back 70,000 seeds to Kew. Just over 2,000 seeds germinated in specially prepared hot houses. Most of the seedlings were sent to Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and later to Singapore, Malaya (Malaysia), Indonesia and other parts of South East Asia. In 1888, Henry Nicholas Ridley, the director of the Botanic Gardens in Singapore discovered that shaving off a thin piece of the tree's bark produced more latex and caused less damage to the tree than did slashing into it as they did in the Amazon. By 1914 Malaysian rubber became so cheap that demand for rubber from the Amazon dropped. A small revival of the rubber industry in Brazil came during the second world war, but this did not last long. By 1910, synthetic rubber emerged.

Hevea brasiliensis, the commercial rubber tree, grows in its natural state to 40 metres. It lives 100 years or more, but as a rubber producer, its economic life is 25–30 years and it seldom grows above 25 metres. Trees have to be about six years old before rubber can be taken safely from them.

Dry rubber is used for making tyres and solid goods. Latex products account for at least 8 per cent of the total rubber consumption, representing the largest group after tyres. Latex is also used to make items like balloons and gloves.

India ranks fourth in world rubber production after Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia. Rubber is mainly grown in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Kerala accounts for more than 90 per cent of the output.





A ZOO WITH A DIFFERENCE

A CEE-NFS Feature

Preethi Shankar
Illustrations : Prithvishwar Gayen

HOW WOULD you feel if you had a lioness for your neighbour? The residents of Subramanyapuram, Banashankari, in Bangalore have had this privilege. It was common for them to see a lioness sprawl behind the gates of a compound like a friendly German shepherd.

Most people know about Sheeba, the abandoned cub from Bannerghatta which was nursed back to health by an Iyengar family in Bangalore. A year and a half old, Sheeba is now back in Bannerghatta but still responds to the Iyengar family and seems to look forward to their visit every week.

Located in one of the residential areas of Bangalore, this house hardly looks any different to an onlooker. But step inside, and you will be welcomed by large models of various animals, embroidered wall hangings depicting fine artistic work, and of course, a lot of greenery. This house is not just a home to the Iyengar family, but also to a host of disabled animals, birds and reptiles.

The Iyengar family is often referred to as the 'zoo family'. They have now formed a Trust with the help of some animal and nature lovers. Although the Animal Rescue and Rehabilitation Trust was registered in 1980, the 'zoo family' has been looking after many injured and disabled animals for the last two decades. After being treated, the animals have been released into the wild. In case of permanent disability, they are taken care of for the rest of their lives. The Trust is recognized by the Animal Welfare Board of India, and with the help of grants it has taken up projects like animal birth control and treatment for sick animals.

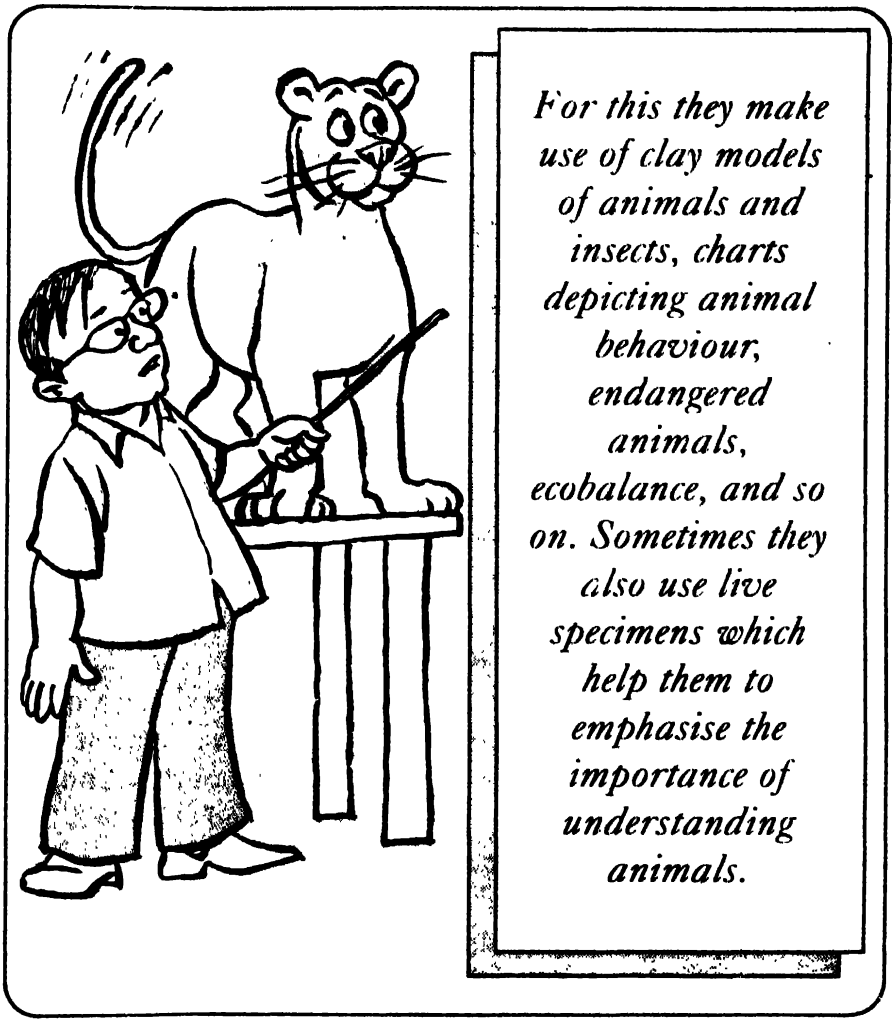
The 'zoo family' legend started way back in the 1960s when Mr. M.K.S. Iyengar started giving shelter to injured animals out of compassion for them. He had also designed wild life models for the forest department, schools and various other insti-

tutions. Now the tradition is being continued by his wife Mrs. Janaki Iyengar, children Mr. Srinath, Director, WWF, Bangalore, and Dr. Shasidhar who are the main trustees.

The family is actively involved in the propagation of the value of conservation of wildlife and natural resources among the general public.

Dr. Shasidhar and Mr. Srinath hold exhibitions and give lectures, demonstrations and radio talks on wild life, nature conservation and compassion towards animals. For this they make use of clay models of animals and insects, charts depicting animal behaviour, endangered animals, ecobalance, and so on. Sometimes they also use live specimens which help them to emphasize the importance of understanding animals. Apart from this, many booklets have been published with the help of the Department of Environment and Ecology. The brothers have also helped the Forest Department in trapping a sloth bear in a village near Nelamangala and transporting it to the Mysore Zoo. Every year Wild Life Week is conducted in various places by the Trust which also holds nature orientation camps for different age groups at Bandipur, Bannerghatta and Madhumalai.

Mr. Srinath is a key resource person of the Trust and an expert at handling snakes. He is responsible for setting up the snake park in the Bannerghatta National Park. He is also on the advisory board of the reptile park in Bannerghatta. His special interest in animals can be attributed to his growing up in a family close to animals.



For this they make use of clay models of animals and insects, charts depicting animal behaviour, endangered animals, ecobalance, and so on. Sometimes they also use live specimens which help them to emphasise the importance of understanding animals.

The zoo, under his care, is a home to many varieties of snakes and other animals. It hosts seven varieties of snakes including a cobra, a couple of trinket snakes, a Russell's viper, a python, a royal snake and several rat snakes. Apart from this, a number of birds like a blind parakeet, and one with a broken wing, pigeons and koels, an injured pond heron and a great Indian hound owl have place in the zoo. There is also a large monitor lizard which was caught in one of the residential areas of Bangalore.

The unique feature of this zoo is that animals here are either paralysed or have a broken leg or wing. Others are too old to tend themselves. They have not been trapped, and it is just accidental that they were seen and fortunate enough to be brought here by

animal lovers.

"Handling injured animals involves risk but it is more dangerous to travel from home to office and back," declares Mr. Srinath. However, there is a way to do things which, when followed, reduces the risk, he adds. He has been bitten by snakes several times and says that he is almost immune to them.

Mr. Srinath points out that monitor lizards once existed all over Bangalore and they are now rare because their habitat has been encroached upon by humans. Mr. Srinath also breeds several varieties of snakes in captivity and releases the young ones in a suitable wild environment.

Of late he has taken up the task of breeding sparrows. He observes that the number of sparrows has dwindled in Bangalore and this he attributes to the loss of nesting areas and lack of food. He explains that the number of tile-roofed houses has come down. The tiled roof formed the major habitat of sparrows, and waste food is either let down the sink or disposed of in plastic bags. There is hardly any sign of food grains in the residential areas of today unlike in the past.

Pointing to the two koels, Mr. Srinath notes that the increase in koel population is the consequence of an increase in the crow population which is a direct indicator of the decline in city hygiene.

Funds are still a problem. The proceeds of the sale of embroidery, greetings, paintings and models done by the trustees are utilized for the maintenance of the animals.

Of course, donations by like-minded people and animal lovers are always an asset. But more often than not funds are short and the family manages by drawing on personal earnings. The neighbours, especially the children, he feels, are quite happy to have a mini zoo around. At times they bring in animals in need of care.

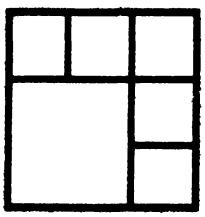
Mr. Srinath is of the opinion that visual technology is not a substitute for direct viewing of animals in their natural habitat or in a zoo. He argues that to understand an animal better one has to have a three dimensional view which television or films cannot provide. Insisting that the zoo is a necessity for more than one reason, he says it can also be a second habitat for many endangered species. Since breeding in captivity has proved to be successful, it could be a way to save many species from becoming extinct. However, he adds, "This does not mean that we should set up a zoo in every town."

When asked whether keeping animals in captivity sends a wrong message to the public, he argues, "So long as it is education-oriented, and not amusement-oriented and the animals in captivity are in near-to-natural and hygienic surroundings, we are not sending any wrong message." Perhaps, the interaction of people with animals at close quarters is the best way to make them aware of the beauty and vulnerability of our wildlife.

Answers to FUNTIME

(January '98)

FAIR AND SQUARE



COCK-A-PIGGLE-DO

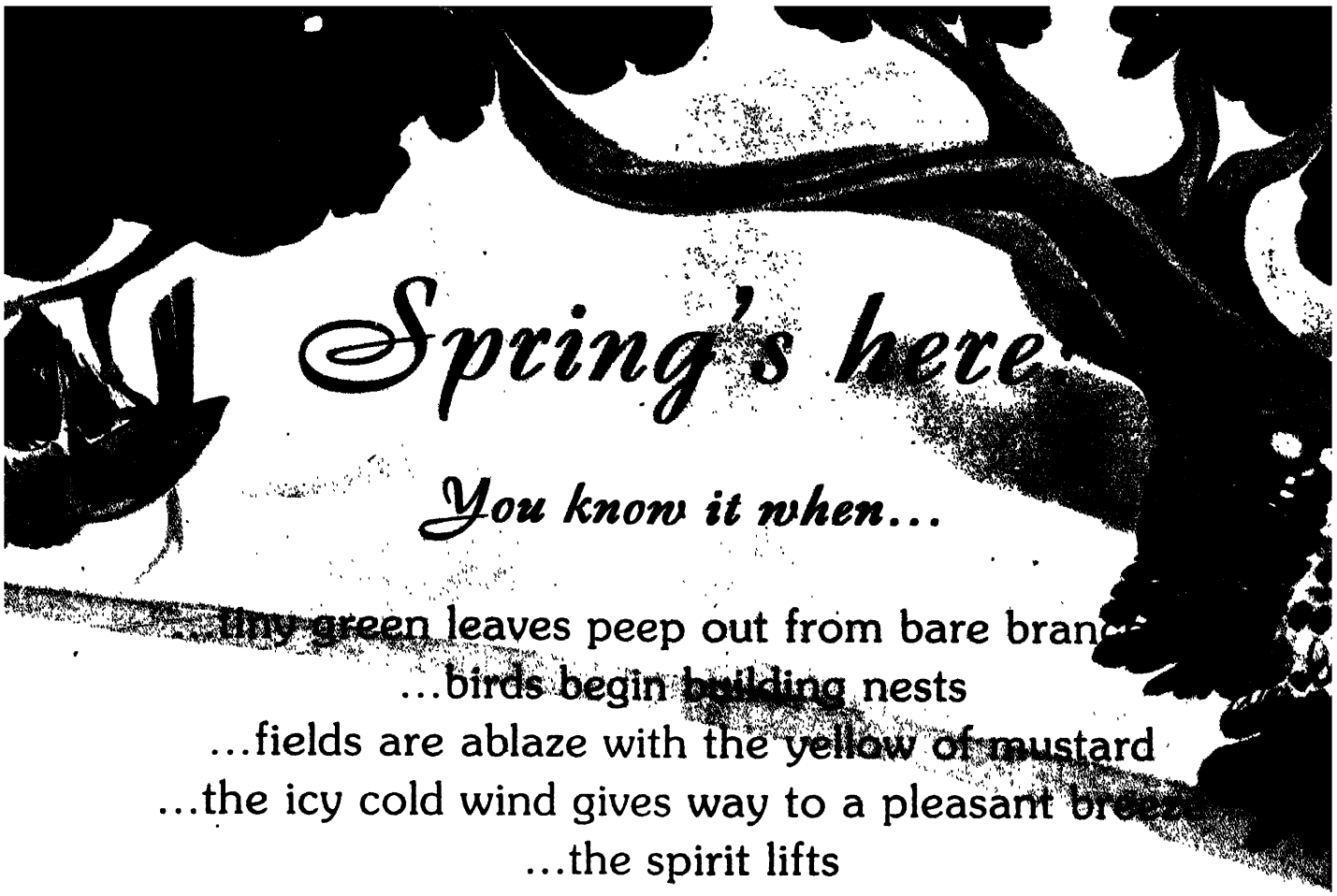
14 pigs and 10 cocks

WHAT AM I?

Bugle

Answers to Bingo (December 1997)

1. Shyam Benegal 2. Anaconda 3. Sea horse 4. England, May 1840 5. Magma 6. Paste 7. Badminton 8. Marble 9. Thomas Alva Edison 10. Versailles 11. Hanover 12. Shere Khan 13. Cabbages and Kings 14. Charles Dickens 15. 9 December 16. December 16/16. Finland 17. London 18. Crystal 19. Kelvin 20. Mother Teresa

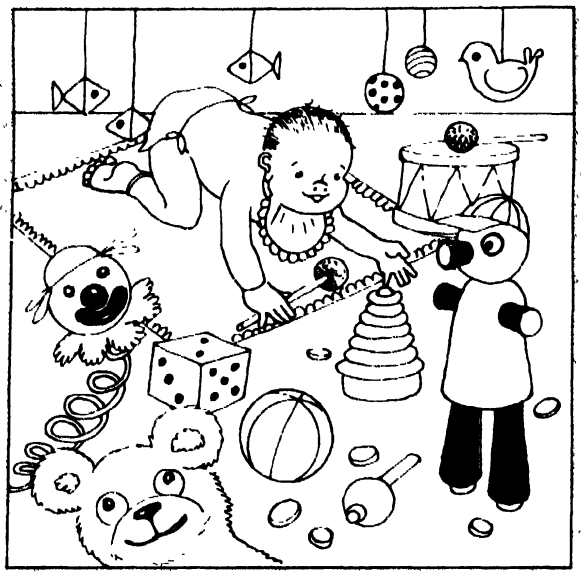


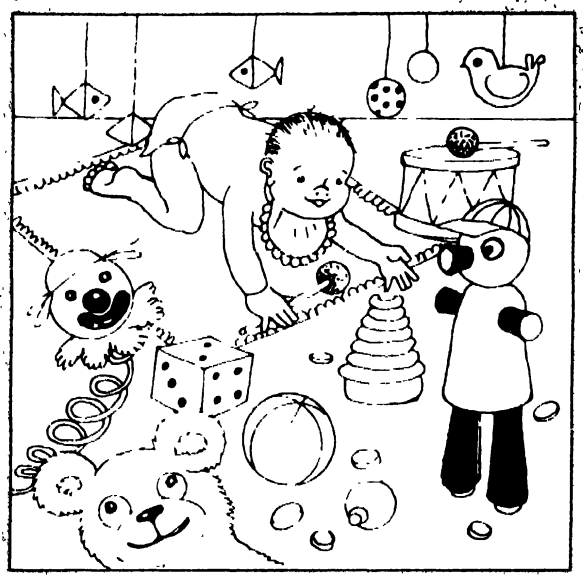
Spring's here

You know it when...

...tiny green leaves peep out from bare branches
...birds begin building nests
...fields are ablaze with the yellow of mustard
...the icy cold wind gives way to a pleasant breeze
...the spirit lifts
...you toss away scarves, gloves and socks
...waking up is no more a trying experience
...hands come out of pockets
...nature stirs
...flowers burst into life
...the koel calls
...the air comes alive with the bustle of life
...there's a bounce in the step and a lilt in the voice
...it's time for cleaning up
...starry nights beckon
...windows are left open
...the rustle of paper reminds you of exams

FUN TIME





SPOT THE DIFFERENCES

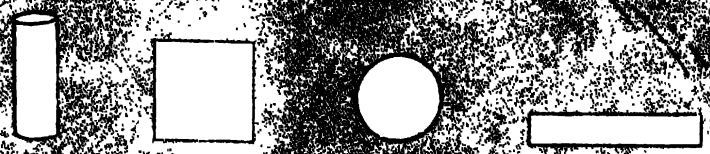
Find six differences between the two pictures above.

PEOPLE'S PROFESSIONS

1. A person who does difficult exercises in a circus : A _ _ _ _ _ _ _
2. A person who breaks into a house to steal things : B _ _ _ _ _ _ _
3. A person who directs an orchestra/choir : C _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
4. A person who treats diseases of the teeth : D _ _ _ _ _ _ _
5. A person who builds roads, bridges : E _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
6. A person trained to put out fires : F _ _ _ _ _ _ _
7. A person who sells food items : G _ _ _ _ _ _
8. A person who kills wild animals : H _ _ _ _ _ _
9. A person who teaches : I _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
10. A person in charge of prisoners : J _ _ _ _ _

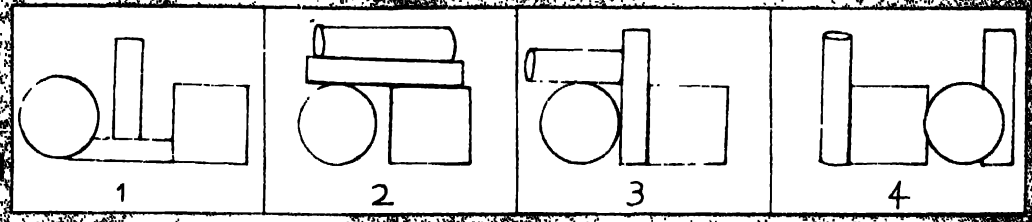
SHA

Here are four figures:

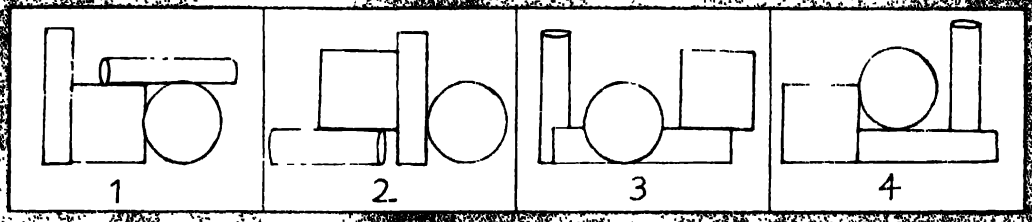


Determine which of the figures in the boxes corresponds to the given conditions.

C touches A and D
A is over C
D is between B and C
A is not on the ground



B is over A and touches D
D is between A and C
C is on the ground



SOU

Match the





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Clarion 4F0E34

A SERIAL STORY

CAPTAIN KYP



Homagni Chaudhuri
Illustrations : Subir Roy

School reopens and Amit just cannot wait to see his friends. It is good to meet everyone after a long vacation. But someone is missing—Kyp, the captain of the football team, who has to be there for the Umkhrah school team to win the Khyrim Cup. Where is he? No one knows, till Mr. Mitra informs the class that Kyp has left school.

Part 2

KYP'S FRIENDS felt very sad that he would no longer come to school. Without Kyp, the school under-thirteen football team had little chance of winning the Khyrim Junior Cup. But why had Kyp dropped out? Amit, Lambor and Raju tried to find out but even if some of the teachers knew the reason, they were not willing to tell them. When Mr. Ghosh, the games teacher, was asked, he shook his head sadly and said, "Kyp has dropped out."

The next morning, Terrance came in early. He had a story to tell and he was excited. "Last evening I saw Kyp," he said. "I was in the car with Daddy. We were going to visit a friend. As we were about to turn into the road leading towards Shillong peak, I saw Kyp working in a roadside eating place. Kyp was busy serving, and I knew that he would not be able to come out and talk."

"Will you recognize the place again?" asked Amit.

"Of course, I will," replied Terrance. "I go that way sometimes. Daddy has a friend in the Mizo colony. The place is just after a truck terminal."

The boys began to make plans. They had to meet Kyp and bring him back to school. "We'll go on a picnic somewhere off Jowai Road," said Amit, "and we'll meet Kyp on the way."

The school had a five day week, with Thursdays and Sun-

days off. After Assembly, when Mr. Mitra entered the classroom, Raju raised his hand, and said, "Please, sir, can we have a picnic tomorrow?"

"School has just re-opened last week," replied Mr. Mitra. "Not so soon. Maybe next month."

Other boys joined in the request with repeated "please Sir's", and the real reason came out. Mr. Mitra thought a little and said, "We at the school know the problem. We cannot do anything, it's the family's decision. But, yes, let us go for a picnic. We'll take the short cut to the restaurant. If you are to talk to Kyp while he is working we must have something to eat at his restaurant."

The next morning, the boys assembled early. They were excited about meeting Kyp. Many of them were carrying their school bags, loaded this time with food. From experience they knew that on a picnic, plenty was not enough. Amit's bag contained 'Lady Kinis'. Grandmother made them very well, much nicer than the shop *gulab-jamuns*. Lambor had brought a cake baked by his mother. Seeing Deepak with a huge tiffin carrier, he asked, "What have you brought?"

Deepak was one of the vegetarian boys. He replied, "*Alu parathas*. And Anjan has brought the same—that's the way we planned it. There will be enough for everyone."

Mr. Mitra led the way.

The walk was a long one. The track by the side of the fruit garden was through open areas and, certainly, much nicer than the busy Nongthymmai Road crowded with buses and trucks.



When the boys reached the roadside open-air restaurant, they were very hungry after the long walk up the slope.

Mr. Mitra asked the boys to wait outside while he went in to talk to the Proprietor. Shetab Singh, the owner of the restaurant, was dressed in a *dhoti* and *pugree*. He was chatting with some customers.

Mr. Singh was happy with Kyp who was a cheerful and willing worker. He was pleased that Kyp's friends, who were students of a prestigious school and so much better off, had come to meet him. "Kyp can take the day off and join the picnic. We'll manage," he said.

As Kyp came out, all the boys started asking questions. Moni Thapa, who was football-mad and certain of inclusion in the under-thirteen team kept saying, "Captain, you have to play for the school team. We must win the Khyrim Junior Cup."

Kyp explained that he had left school because his aunt wanted him to. "But, I like working here," Kyp said. "Much of the time I'm outdoors. I fetch water from a nearby spring. I bring two small buckets at a time and I make many trips. Mr. Singh never tells me to hurry. At lunch, I help with serving. But before that I eat as much as I like. It is Mr. Singh's

rule that those looking after the guests must not be hungry. In the afternoons, there is less work and sometimes I play football with other boys who work here. Most days I'm off before dark."

"But don't you miss school?" asked Lambor.

Kyp looked a little sad as he replied, "I miss you all." Then he smiled, and said, "But there is no homework. Such a relief, I always had trouble getting it all done. My aunt takes my salary but sometimes I get tips and I'm allowed to keep them. Right now, I'm saving up for a pair of good football shoes. And the food here is very good."

From inside the restaurant, there was a cheerful shout, "*Jadoh* ready." Mr. Singh was smiling at the boys. *Jadoh* is rice cooked with pork in lard.

Kyp ran inside to help set the tables but Mr. Singh said, "Kyp, sit down with your friends. Today, we'll serve you."

Deepak and Anjan had two *parathas* each. The other boys ate their *Jadoh* and said, "Good, very good."

Kyp said, "Mr. Singh buys the meat and vegetables himself. He is always checking everything—even to see if our finger nails are clean. Many of our customers are regulars. They miss eating here only when they are away with their trucks."

After the meal, the boys resumed their hike, with Kyp leading the way. He took his friends to the small field where he played football. The boys had brought a ball but the ground was occupied by a number of small children, all running around madly after a ball.

They continued to climb, and reached the top of a small hill. It was a grass-covered knoll. The slopes had young pine trees growing. The place seemed to be far away from the town; it was so quiet with no one else around. The boys tried to play volley ball but the ball rolled down and was found only after much search. There was running around and some wrestling when Mr. Mitra was not looking.

A sheet was spread. Deepak and Anjan opened their tiffins and handed out *parathas*. Stuffed with potatoes and with layers of *ghee*, the *parathas* were delicious and soon disappeared. Other boys added their contributions and it all ended with everyone feeling very full.

The boys started back. Kyp left at the junction of Jowai Road. He had not told his friends how much his family needed the money and how necessary it was to keep Mr. Singh pleased with his work.

Luckily, the way back was mostly downhill. Terrance said to Amit and Lambor, "It is sad that Kyp has dropped out of school. We'll never win the Khyrim Cup now."

Amit said, "It's wrong of the Captain to have left school. He had a scholarship and there was no expense. He should have completed school before starting full-time work."



Lambor disagreed. He said, "Amit, you are to be a doctor and you must study. Kyp will have his own restaurant. He told me. And I'm sure he'll earn more than you as a doctor or me as an engineer."

Terrance added, "He doesn't have to sit stiffly in a classroom the whole day. He's going up and down the hills and he has so many friends."

Raju said, "And Kyp knows enough to do the marketing. He can calculate prices. And if necessary, he can keep a clerk. I know a friend of my father's who's a contractor. He never completed school, yet now he employs many people."

*

Amit was back home by four in the evening. He was hungry again and hoped that Grandmother would offer a big snack. He was lucky. Grandmother, Mother, Debuda, Amrita, and even Dr. Roy were having tea. As he went towards them, Grandmother said, "Amit, your favourite ***kachoris***."



But Mother took one look at Amit and said in a firm voice that forbade argument, "Take off your shoes and brush them outside. And wash up properly." Amit made a face but went away to do as told.

Looking slightly cleaner, he was soon back. He helped himself to some ***kachoris*** and the light potato curry that went with it.

When Amit's hunger was a little satiated he said, "We met Kyp. He's so lucky—he doesn't have to go to school."

"Amit," said Grandmother in a rare serious mood, "boys must go to school. It may seem fun at eleven to earn money but you must think of the future. You need education to do anything worthwhile."

"Yes," said Dr. Roy, "otherwise you are handicapped. Can't fill a form. Can't read directions. Get cheated all the time."

Debashish came to the rescue. "I don't think Amit wants to drop out. He admires Kyp for helping out his family," he said.

"Children should help," said Dr. Roy getting up, "but be it boy or girl, school must come first. I've made up my mind to meet Kyp's aunt. He will have to return to school."

"Should you interfere?" asked Grandmother. "Kyp's aunt is not your patient. You don't know the lady, She won't like a stranger advising her."

"But I've met Kyp," replied Dr. Roy. "He should at least pass the school final examination and then go in for something worthwhile. If I don't send him back to school, I'll feel guilty."

"Uncle," said Debashish, "you have to be careful. You are from the plains and Kyp's aunt will think that you, an outsider in Shillong, are interfering in matters that don't concern you."

Dr. Roy became angry. He said, "I'm not an outsider. I was born in Meghalaya and I know about our tribal customs. I must do what I can."

Dr. Roy rang up Mr. Lyngdoh, the Principal of Umkhrah High School. Both the gentlemen had busy schedules but they decided to meet in the Principal's office that afternoon.

*

"Kyp is a good boy," said Mr. Lyngdoh. "We want him back in the school. Mr. Mitra, the class teacher, met Kyp's aunt, but the lady refused to change her mind. She wants Kyp to earn for the family. I don't think the school can do anything more. We pay for his books but we can't pay him for coming to school."

Dr. Roy said, "His aunt may

think she's right, but I'll speak to her. Where can I meet her?"

Mr. Lyngdoh sent for Kyp's class teacher. Mr. Mitra had just dismissed his class and was free. He informed them that Kyp's aunt, Mrs. Doris Laptham, was the owner of a small shop close to the fire brigade, and she was there the whole day.

Dr. Roy left the school in search of the shop. Mr. Mitra's directions were precise and there was no difficulty in locating the place. The small shop sold the usual popular items that passers-by purchased for instant consumption. Business was obviously good. Contrary to Mr. Roy's expectations, the lady running the shop was young, neatly dressed and friendly.

"Are you Mrs. Laptham?" asked Dr. Roy in Khasi.

"Yes," replied the lady in English. "But call me Doris. Everybody does."

"I came to talk about Kyp," said Dr. Roy.

Doris smiled, took out a cane stool from inside the shop, and asked him to sit. After that, except for the occasional interruption from a shopper, she listened patiently to Dr. Roy.

Finally she said, "I know Kyp should complete school but we can't afford it. I feel bad, but Kyp understands. I myself dropped out after class six. I wanted to be a nurse in a hospital. Instead, I became an *ayah*. My elder sister died two years ago and I have to look after her three children. Kyp is the eldest. I also have my own three children. I'm the *Khadduh* and responsible for the family."

Khasi society was traditionally matriarchal. As elsewhere, life styles in Shillong were changing, but many respected the old customs—the clan looking after its members, irrespective of their status. The traditional chiefs of the Khasis, the Syiems, were males, but succession was through the mother's or rather sister's side. After marriage, the Khasi woman does not change her name; instead the man moves to his wife's house. The children belong to the mother's clan and take her surname. The larger part of the family property is inherited by the *Khadduh*, the youngest daughter and it is her duty, as the most energetic, to look after the other members of the family.

Doris continued her explanation, "My husband injured his back four years ago. We sold the small house for getting better medical treatment but he still finds it difficult to work. I have seven mouths to feed. We have no savings and unless Kyp works, how will we manage?"

"Can't Kyp work part-time outside school hours?" asked Dr. Roy.

"Doing what?" asked Doris. "And how much will he earn?"

Dr. Roy said, "If he must work, Kyp should do something that will give him a future, say as a mechanic, though even for that it is better if he is educated."

"At least Kyp is not breaking stones in a quarry," replied Doris. "At the restaurant, they trust him and give him responsible jobs. Cleaning pots and pans is not his main work. Maybe with a little luck, he will have his own restaurant in the future."

It was nearly time for Dr. Roy's surgery. "I have to go now," he said, "but I'll come and meet you again."

"Please do. *Khublei,*" Doris thanked him.

*

At dinner that night, Mother asked, "What did Kyp's aunt say? Has she changed her mind?"

"She has a problem," replied Dr. Roy. "The family does not have enough money. I have to find a way to help Kyp."

(To be continued)



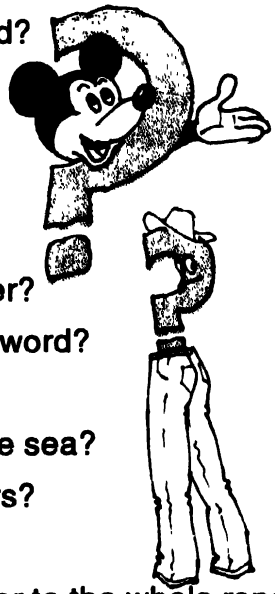


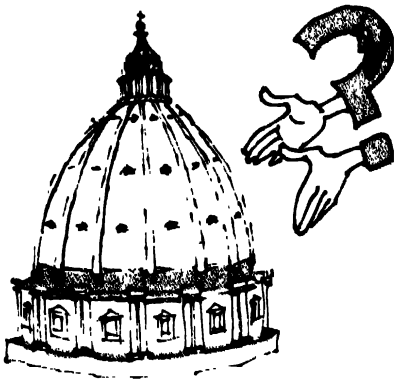
Here's a quiz to perk you up. Send in your entries and if your answers are correct, you may win one of our two prizes—of Rs. 100/- each. Each entry must be accompanied by your subscription number or with a cheque for a year's subscription. Children upto 16 years may participate. Include your name, age, address and the name of your school. Last date for receiving entries: March 1, 1998. You could also fax your entries to us at 11-3721090.

By M. L.



1. What was the code name of the atom bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima?
2. Who wrote *Midnight's Children*?
3. Which is the only mammal that can fly?
4. Who was the scientist who developed the first successful vaccine against polio?
5. In which year did Leander Paes win the Arjuna Award?
6. Which actor is popularly known as the 'Grand Young Man of India'?
7. Which is the youngest religion in the world?
8. Which is the longest glacier in the world?
9. Which is the driest place on earth?
10. Which travels faster—light or sound?
11. Who won the Magsaysay Award in 1996?
12. Who is the world's highest paid entertainer?
13. Which is the longest English palindromic word?
14. Which was Mickey Mouse's first film?
15. What is the most poisonous creature in the sea?
16. Who designed the great dome of St. Peters?
17. Who invented jeans?
18. What is the geographical term used to refer to the whole range of weather conditions found in a region during the course of the year?
19. Who invented the ball-point pen?
20. What is the unit used to measure the loudness of sound?







CW Bonanza! At the end of twelve issues, there will be a Special Bumper Prize drawn by lot from among the 24 winners of the year. So come on, folks! Get cracking!

Congratulations Radhika K., Chennai and Mitu Sharma, Lucknow!
Winners of Bingo, December 1997.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A SCIENCE STUDENT

Mansi Narang
Illustration : Beejee

THE DAY begins with the sound of the alarm. The sleepy-eyed, young lady unwillingly gets out of paradise (read sleep) and goes through the tedious process of getting dressed. She snatches her breakfast in one hand, her hastily stuffed bag on the verge of collapse in the other, and dashes off to the bus-stop, half wishing that the bus might already have left. Sadly, luck is not on her side (it never is).

She dozes on her way to school. On reaching, she grabs hold of the first classmate she sees and is soon engaged in an animated conversation. No, it isn't about the latest film or soap (she hardly knows they exist). It is about how she has been trying to study five subjects at the same time and losing her marbles in the bargain.

Once inside the class, she fights sleep courageously and takes notes at supersonic speed without once looking into her notebook. Her eyes remain glued to the blackboard and her pen to the register (she is one of the reasons why ball-pen companies are doing so well) as teacher after teacher pour the wealth of their knowledge into her brain, most of which spills over and is blotted into the register to stay there till examination time.

The lunch break is no break for her. She eats a little of everything anybody brings and gets back to work.

When she enters the laboratory, nine times out of ten, she makes a mess of everything. She goes to the library and issues books by weight, considering it her duty to study at least ten kg a day. She sits down with the bulkiest book and buries herself in its pages. When the bell rings, the librarian picks up the book, shakes it so that the girl falls out and despatches her to class.

The final bell is just another death knell for her. She goes home, gobbles up her lunch and all the tablets that are supposed to sharpen her memory and starts on the way to her innumerable tuition classes. Into a bus, into a tuition class, into a bus again. In and out of so many classes and buses that she cannot make out one from the other. If she catches herself taking notes from fellow passengers in the bus, she knows it is time to go home. The classes have ended, but so has the day. She reaches home in a semi-conscious state only to solve a dozen problems each in Maths and Chemistry. She then proceeds to draw the insides of a rat.

After dinner, she is back to work, this time preparing for the half a dozen tests she has to face the next day. Her work is usually finished before the sun shines again.

She says her aim in life is to reach some place, which, she is half sure, she will never be able to.

She describes ecstasy as a free period, heaven as a place where she plans to catch up on her sleep and her wildest fantasy is two teachers being absent on the same day. She faints if you raise the figure to three.

This is a day in the life of a twelfth standard science student. She is the same person who stood with a broad grin on her face two years ago with a marksheet in her hand that read, 'SCIENCE—90%', and was overjoyed at being included in the science section.

My full sympathies with those who identify with this story. And for all my juniors who are having second thoughts, my best wishes that they may steer their boats safely through the storm.

The Month That Was...

By Geeta Menon

December 1: Twelve lakh diseased *sal* trees to be cut in Madhya Pradesh.

December 2: Value of the rupee falls to all-time low of Rs. 39.90 against the dollar.

Pakistan President, Farooq Ahmad Leghari resigns.

December 4: President dissolves 11th Lok Sabha, the shortest in our history.

December 5. Bomb blasts in three trains kill ten in Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

December 7: Femina girl, Divya Chauhan, is adjudged Miss Asia Pacific first runner up.

India-Sri Lanka cricket Test series ends in a draw. Saurav Ganguly declared Man of the Series.

December 9: Pakistan cricket team creates history at home by clinching Test series 3-0 against West Indies after 39 years.

December 10: Salman Haidar, former foreign secretary, succeeds L.M. Singhvi as High Commissioner to UK.

December 11: Delegates from 159 nations at the World Climate Conference call for mandatory cuts in emission of greenhouse gases by industrialized nations.

December 12: Laloo Prasad Yadav gets bail.

December 15. The three-year-old Rishang Keishing government in Manipur voted out of power.

December 16: President intervenes to end the feud between the election commissioners.

December 19: A Singapore-owned Silkair jet crashes on the Indonesian island of Sumatra, killing all 104 on board.

December 20: Thirty-year-old Shiv Sena holds internal polls for the first time to elect Bal Thackeray *pramukh* for life.

December 22: West Bengal Congress leader Mamata Banerjee expelled from the Congress following her declaration that she will not contest the coming Lok Sabha elections on the Congress symbol and under party president, Sitaram Kesri.

December 23: Aslam Sher Khan, P.R. Kumaramangalam and Ayub Khan quit Congress to join BJP.

December 24: An unmanned version of Japan's magnetically levitated Maglev train makes another world record, clocking 550 kmph on its testline.

December 25: Gujarat governor, Krishnapal Singh, dissolves State Assembly on chief minister Dilip Parikh's recommendation. Dilip Parikh heads the caretaker Government.

The second one-day international between India and Sri Lanka abandoned after three overs because of the unplayable nature of the pitch—an ignominous first in international cricket history.

December 27: An independent film maker, Tapan Kumar Mukherjee, stumbles upon what appears to be evidence of an ancient civilization, probably 5,000 years old. Chiselled stones, iron slabs, pottery and ruins of temples were found scattered over a vast area of scrubby undergrowth near east Rajasthan.

December 28: Sri Lanka wins against India by 5 wickets in the third and final one-day international to level the series.

December 29: Sonia Gandhi announces decision to campaign actively for the Congress.

The election expenditure limit for Lok Sabha candidates raised to Rs. 15 lakhs.

Former Congress MP Suresh Kalmadi, floats a new party—Pune Vikas Aghadi (Pune Development Front).

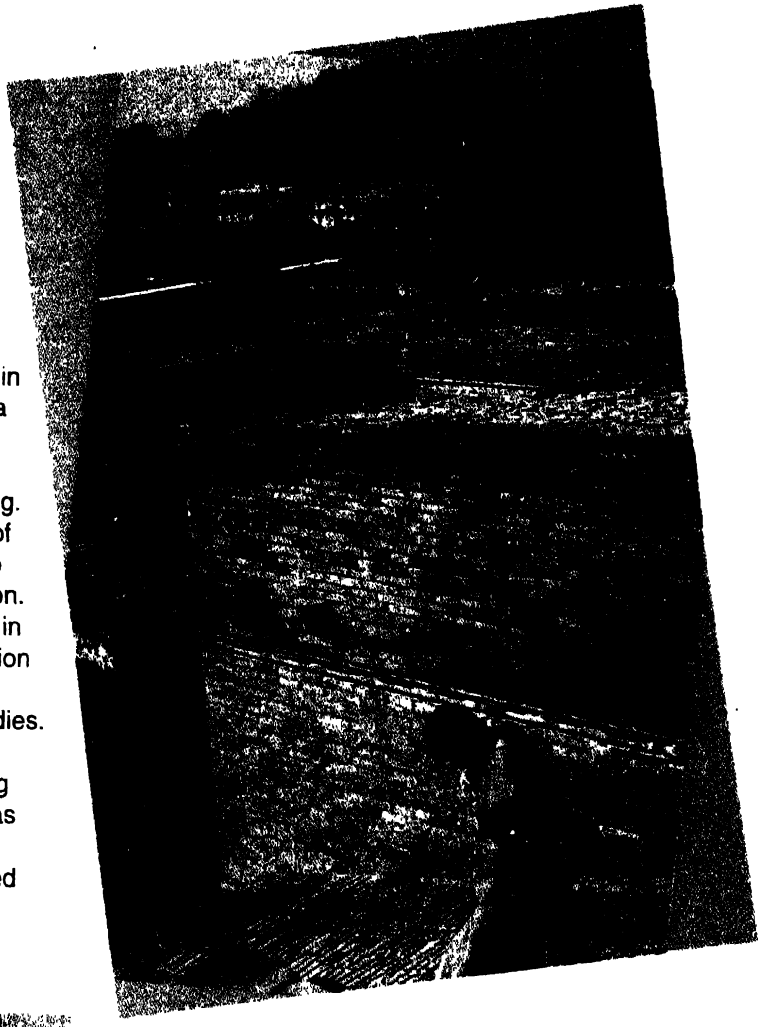
The Hong Kong government exterminates 1.2 to 1.3 million poultry to eliminate threat by a new and dangerous strain of influenza, known as 'bird flu'.

December 31: Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's presidential nominee, Rafiq Tarar, elected President.

Thousands throng VDIS (Voluntary Disclosure of Income Scheme) offices before the deadline at midnight to declare concealed income.

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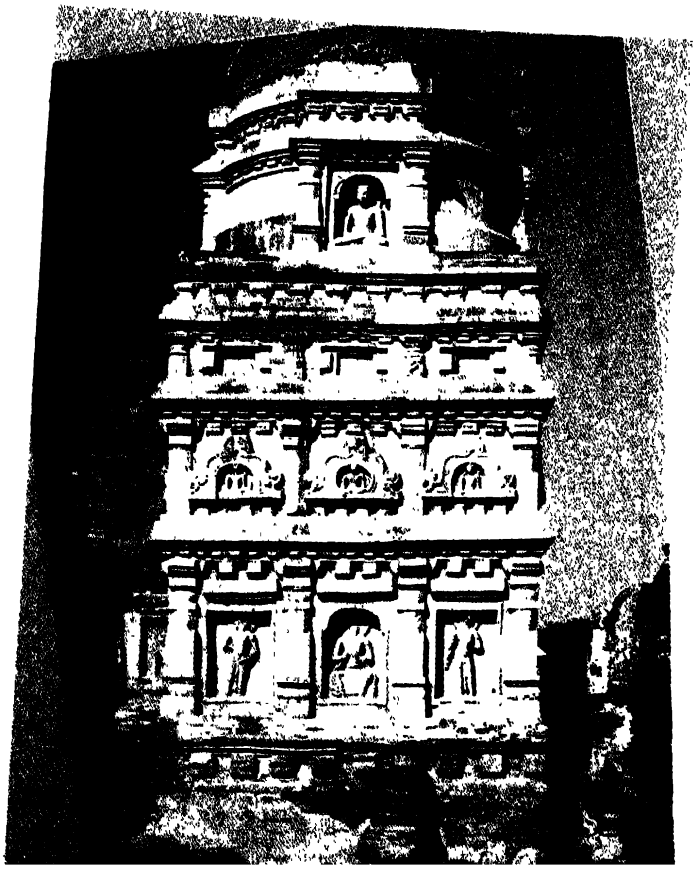
Nalanda University



Nalanda University was established near Rajgir in Bihar as a monastery towards the end of the Gupta period by Sakraditya. Gifts from kings and wealthy persons converted this monastery into a vast university. It remained autonomous in its functioning.

The university became famous during the time of Harsha Vardhana (606-647A.D.) of Thaneswar, who devoted about one-fourth of his income to education.

Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese traveller who studied in Nalanda for five years, provides a graphic description of it in his work 'Si-yu-ki' or 'Record of Western Countries'. Nalanda was a place for advanced studies. As many as 1,500 professors taught over 5,000 students for whom education, boarding and lodging was free. The curricula included Buddhist as well as Brahminical Literature, Logic, Grammar, Medicine, Philosophy and Astronomy. Education was provided according to the student's choice and capability. Nearly a thousand lectures were delivered daily.



Learning was by discussion. There existed very cordial relations between the teachers and the taught.

Many Chinese travellers visited India during the latter half of the seventh century. Among them was I Tsing who studied at Nalanda for ten years. In his work entitled 'A Record of the Buddhist Religion as Practised in India and the Malay Archipelago', he described the *guru-shishya parampara* and the importance given to moral education.

Buddhist monasteries took in students only for ten years, but those wishing to be ordained as monks had to remain for a longer period.

The existence of several universities such as Takshashila, Vikramshila and Vallabhi suggests that education in those times was quite widespread.

Nalanda, described in certain inscriptions as Mahagrahahara, was responsible for the spread of Indian culture to Tibet, China, central and south-east Asian countries. It continued to flourish for several decades. It was destroyed towards the end of the eleventh century by Muhamed Bin Bakhtiyar Khilji, one of the generals of Mohammad Ghori.

Abhijit Chandra Chandra

